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New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m.

Agenda item 8 *(continued)*

General debate

The President *(spoke in French)*: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malta.

Mr. Borg (Malta): Mr. President, I would like to join other delegations that have preceded me in offering my congratulations and those of my delegation on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. I am convinced that your political experience and diplomatic skill will assist and guide this Assembly in its deliberations, especially in addressing important and critical issues on the international agenda.

I also congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for the excellent manner in which he presided over the sixty-fourth session of the Assembly. Through his commitment and leadership role, Mr. Treki successfully guided the Assembly in dealing effectively with a number of priority issues facing our Organization.

I also take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his dedication and untiring efforts to ensure that our Organization lives up to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. His comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/65/1) indicates in no uncertain terms the progress the United Nations has made under his leadership and guidance, for which Malta is extremely grateful.

During the past 12 months, the international community has been overwhelmed by the global and financial crises. The crises have been exacerbated by many humanitarian tragedies around the world. Natural disasters, terrorist attacks, armed violence and internal conflicts have continued to produce havoc, destruction, loss of life and the increased forced displacement of people worldwide. In the face of these negative realities, our Organization has continued to be the refuge of the most vulnerable and deprived of our societies, to address increasing inequalities, to respond cohesively and rapidly to disasters and calamities, and to seek to improve the very nature of the existence and survival of humankind. It is an accepted norm that there is no development without security, no security without development, and neither without respect for human rights.

Important achievements have been registered in recent months in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. The new Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, designed to replace the 1991 START I agreement and signed in Prague in April by the Presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation, created the appropriate political momentum for preparing the way for a successful outcome to the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

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Malta is particularly pleased that among the agreed actions taken by the Conference was the endorsement by the NPT States parties of the convening by the Secretary-General, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, in consultation with the countries of the region, of a conference in 2012 to address the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction.

The General Assembly's resolutions recognize that positive developments worldwide, but particularly in Europe, the Maghreb and the Middle East, can be enhanced by closer Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in all spheres. Thirty-five years ago, on 1 August 1975, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe — now the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) — meeting in Helsinki, Finland, adopted the Final Act, incorporating an important chapter dedicated exclusively to the Mediterranean that affirmed, among other things, that security in the Mediterranean is closely linked to European security, as well as to international peace and security.

Malta, a European country but nonetheless Mediterranean, has worked for many years, and even since becoming a Member of this Organization, towards a Euro Mediterranean foreign policy that embraces confidence- and security-building initiatives that further enhance dialogue and understanding in our region. Indeed, my country has been present at the creation of all the Mediterranean forums in existence today. Through its membership of the European Union, Malta has solidified these efforts in a manner that promotes the ever-increasing connectedness of the European-Mediterranean partnership.

Today, Malta is the host of the European Commission-League of Arab States Liaison Office, which has formalized relations between the European Commission and the Arab world in a way that has never been done before. Indeed, Malta has translated its character as an interlocutor with a European identity and Mediterranean characteristics into the role of a political and cultural bridge to our neighbours to the North and South, and even beyond.

But our commitment to the Mediterranean dimension does not stop there. Malta continues to seize every opportunity to contribute further to this dialogue of partners. This has certainly been the case within the Union for the Mediterranean, where Malta has played an active part in ensuring that the requisite momentum is maintained despite occasional political hurdles. In the institutional domain, Malta has nominated a Deputy Secretary-General, an honour accorded to six Union members. The Maltese Deputy Secretary-General has been entrusted with the portfolio covering social and civil affairs, an area undoubtedly of vital interest to all Union partners.

Next month, Malta will host the Mediterranean Conference of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which will address, from a Mediterranean perspective, issues currently being debated within the OSCE in the dialogue on the future of European security. On 8 and 9 November, Malta will be the venue for the first regional conference for the Mediterranean of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. The regional conference is expected to adopt a strategy document and an action plan expressing the commitment of the Group of Friends of the Alliance to advancing goals in concrete terms in a region where intercultural dialogue and cooperation have great potential for success in overcoming the big challenges the region faces.

In the first half of 2011 Malta, a member of the Western Mediterranean Forum since 1991, intends to host the second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Forum, known as the 5+5. The convening of the Summit, the second of its kind in seven years, should, among other purposes, serve to reaffirm the relevance of the 5+5 dialogue in the current context. Malta continues to attach great value to this informal mechanism as a platform for open and frank discussion between North and South.

It is also of satisfaction to record the successful first joint International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, held in Malta last February, and organized by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean. In this context I would like to recognize the importance of resolution 64/124, adopted by the General Assembly in December 2009, whereby the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, whose seat is in Malta, was granted observer status and invited to participate in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

That brings me to an issue that closely involves the Mediterranean region. I am referring to the situation in the Middle East, with the Palestinian question at its core. Malta joins other Member States in welcoming the decision reached last month between the Israelis and the Palestinians to resume direct negotiations to resolve all permanent status issues. The launching of direct negotiations on 2 September in Washington, D.C., followed by the Sharm el-Sheikh and Jerusalem meetings, has renewed the sense of urgency and expectation for the resolution of an issue that has been on the international agenda for these last 62 years. The intense and unstinting efforts made during these past few months by the Quartet, the Secretary-General and the Arab League, as well as the Israelis and Palestinians themselves, in addition to the valuable contribution of the United States Administration, have opened new possibilities for the emergence of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel. As a member of the international community, Malta will continue to play its part within the United Nations, the European Union and other international, regional and subregional forums to support the creation of the right conditions for all peoples of the Mediterranean and the Middle East to live in peace and prosperity.

This year has brought us stark reminders of the devastation and loss of life that we can expect from climate change if it continues unabated. Yet, despite such warnings, the international community has yet to adopt a sufficiently ambitious response strategy that would bind us all to contributing fairly to mitigating climate change, keeping it within manageable limits. Important steps have indeed been taken over the past two decades, but the great expectations of a decisive push forward in Copenhagen last year were not realized. Nevertheless, we must persevere on the road ahead — perhaps more pragmatically than dramatically. Copenhagen did produce several seeds of agreement that can be harvested in Cancún in December, where operational decisions could advance action on several fronts of broad interest to Member States.

Integrating the expected climatic impacts into our vision of the future is in fact a requirement for all of us, large and small. Yet the topic often lingers on the sidelines of policymaking. We must give adaptation the political and economic attention it deserves and ensure well-targeted financial support to vulnerable countries or communities most in need of it. I would also like to underline the potential of cooperative action on adaptation at regional levels, and it is in this context that Malta is supporting the Mediterranean Climate Change Initiative announced by the Prime Minister of Greece.

The protection of the human being continues to constitute a top priority for my country. In this regard, we have witnessed during the past year important developments within the United Nations that will significantly contribute to delivering results for a more just world and to putting system-wide coherence into practice. We note the progress, small but most welcome, on the discussion on the responsibility to protect. It will be recalled that five years ago, the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) called for an expansion of the United Nations capabilities for early warning and assessment of possible genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, in addition to supporting the establishment of an early warning capability. Malta therefore highly commends the interactive dialogue that took place in July and commends the initiative of the Secretary-General to set up a United Nations joint office to deal with the prevention of genocide and the wider range of crimes and violations covered by the responsibility to protect.

Another important development has been the United Nations Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons (see resolution 64/293, annex). Still another aspect of human trafficking is the smuggling of human beings. The phenomenon of illegal immigration, stoked by the greed and callous operations of organized criminal groups in the Mediterranean, is putting at risk the lives of hundreds of immigrants on the threshold of Europe. Malta has for some years now been a country of destination, attracting a disproportionate influx of illegal immigrants and asylum-seekers. Malta's need for assistance in providing beneficiaries of international protection with a durable solution has been recognized by many. While Malta affirms its commitment to abiding by its international obligations, at the same time we reiterate our calls on the international community to continue to assist us in the process of resettling these unfortunate people.

While not new phenomena, piracy and armed robbery at sea against vessels continue to be an issue of grave concern for international navigation and the

safety of commercial maritime routes. Malta, as one of the leading flag States in the world, is very much concerned about the increase in the frequency and ferocity of pirate attacks on merchant ships off the coast of Somalia. It is to address that concern that we intend to promote a debate within the international community on new issues, such as piracy, in the sphere of the law of the sea which have cropped up since the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in 1982.

We intend to launch a fresh and constructive debate among like-minded States on the question of human responsibilities. Even though we are here treading on ground that may prove to be difficult, we believe that while the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual form the cornerstone of a free and democratic society, so do human responsibilities. Rights and duties are two sides of the same coin. Our commitment to duties should be as firm as that to rights. Stressing the rights of society and our duties towards others — which in no case should overshadow our attention to the rights of the individual — puts emphasis on that which keeps society together. Malta shall take up this matter to achieve a measure of progress in this field in the international community.

Before concluding, allow me to pay a tribute in memory to President Guido de Marco, one of my predecessors, who as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, and as President of Malta, bestowed honour on his country and the people of Malta, which he loved dearly. His passing away last month left a great void not only among the Maltese population, but also for the many who worked with him for the betterment of those in the international community who are oppressed, weak and vulnerable.

Twenty years ago, this Assembly elected him to serve as President at the forty-fifth session. His strong belief in and steadfast support of the United Nations can be encapsulated in his own words at the opening plenary of the session on 18 September 1990 when, in referring to the enormous challenges that lay ahead, he stated that

> "equally enormous is the political will to guarantee that mankind's destiny is safeguarded not only by individual countries, but by a strong United Nations" (A/45/PV.1, p. 22).

His election as President ushered in, among other things, new initiatives for the revitalization of our General Assembly — a legacy that has continued and continues today. By following Guido de Marco's vision for and love of the United Nations, my country shall continue supporting this Organization and its Secretary-General to make our world a better place for present and future generations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I join in the tribute to former General Assembly President Guido de Marco expressed by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malta.

I now call on His Excellency Mr. Abubakr Al Qirbi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Qirbi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, on behalf of the Government of Yemen, I am pleased to express to you our warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. We are confident that your abilities and wisdom, Sir, will lead to the success of this session in fulfilment of its desired goal.

I also wish to refer with appreciation and pride to the good work of Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, the previous President of the General Assembly, and congratulate him for his tireless efforts that led the previous session to a successful conclusion, not the least of which was his participation in the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

We also wish to thank His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his continuous efforts to reform our Organization and increase its role in the humanitarian and development fields and in the achievement of international peace and security.

The Republic of Yemen is witnessing complex development and political, social and environmental challenges. A number of factors and circumstances have led to their formation, including the international financial crisis, with its negative effect on the Yemeni economy, and a decline in our progress towards the achievement of the MDGs. There is a severe shortage of available resources owing to the low production and low price of oil, on which the Government depends as a main source of income, representing 75 per cent of its general income. There has also been a decline in remittances from expatriates and in tourism, in addition

to overpopulation, paucity of water resources, and limited contributions from development partners for funding anti-poverty programmes and providing decent standards of living for our citizens.

Yemen's pro rata share of official development assistance (ODA) is the lowest of the least developed countries in the world. With a view to achieving economic development and conducting financial and economic reforms, my country has recently concluded an agreement with the International Monetary Fund to implement a programme that will lead to financial straightening out of the budget deficit and stem the progressive decline in Government level of support for fuel in a manner that would contribute to alleviating the general budgetary burden falling on the State.

A number of administrative, financial and judiciary reforms have been adopted, as have efforts to combat corruption and to apply decentralization of power. My Government is now trying to develop its fourth five-year development plan for the years 2011-2015. We have started a political dialogue with opposition parties in order to find agreement on how to address all the challenges faced by Yemen. We have set up election laws and introduced a number of constitutional reforms, called for the formation of a National Unity Government, in preparation for conducting parliamentary elections next April.

Last week, there were a number of meetings in New York on a new initiative regarding cooperation with Yemen, under the name of Friends of Yemen. Participants included representatives of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the European Union, the five permanent members of the Security Council, along with Turkey, Jordan and Egypt, as well as international donor funds and institutions. The purpose of the meeting was to garner support for our efforts to achieve development and combat extremism, terrorism and piracy. We are confident that this cooperation will strengthen our security capabilities to carry out our development plans, reinforce our ability to combat terrorism and protect sea lanes in the Gulf of Aden and the southern part of the Red Sea from piracy and protect our borders.

Among the challenges Yemen has faced are the difficult political developments following a rebellion in the Governorate of Sa'dah, which has complicated the Government's efforts at achieving national peace and reconstruction. This rebellion, in addition to six wars imposed on Yemen, have caused the displacement of tens of thousands of citizens and forced the establishment of refugee camps in coordination with international relief organizations. The conflict came to an end once the rebel group accepted the six conditions that the Government posed, including the release of a great number of prisoners and agreeing to the Doha Accords, the time frame and implementation of which, as sponsored by sisterly Qatar, we are in the process of carrying out. The Government has responded by peacefully reaching out to the rebels, while upholding the principle of sovereignty and the rule of law throughout the country. The country upheld the right to confront any groups that violate the Constitution and the rule of law, or that practise terrorism, violence or sabotage.

My country is also suffering from the terrorist activities of Al-Qaida, which has been carrying out new operations, such as assassinating leaders in our security sector. It is trying to entrench its position on the Arabian Peninsula by cooperating with opponents to Yemeni unity, such as the southern secessionists, who call for secession in defiance of the will of the majority of the Yemeni people. They also support subversive elements in Sa'dah, in service of the interests of Al-Qaida, and seek to spread instability and anarchy in the country through their terrorist activities targeting Yemen, the region and the rest of the world.

Our security apparatus has managed to make headway in arresting many terrorists and aborting their operations. These terrorists now live in a state of fear and are unable to carry out their terrorist plans. As a complement to the efforts to liquidate Al Qaida, there remains a pressing and important need to build and foster national abilities and coordinate intelligence and security activities.

Experience has proven that outside interference designed to combat terrorism further compounds the situation and paves the way for local sympathy for terrorist groups. Yemen is an effective partner with the international community in combating terrorism. Our success today in waging pre-emptive strikes against Al-Qaida requires that the international community take a strong stand by providing us with its full backing and support.

Since its assumption of the chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China, the Republic of Yemen has enthusiastically and willingly tried to reach consensus

on a number of issues of interest to the Group and that will maintain the unity and solidarity of the Group and further its relations with the developed countries. Recently, Yemen led the difficult negotiations to arrive at the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (resolution 65/1), which contains a work programme for the coming five years. Yemen's leadership of the Group enabled it to achieve much of the South's agenda, which serves the interests of all developing countries. It is leading other, highly complex negotiations on conventions having to do with the environment and climate change.

We are proud to have chaired the meetings of the Group of 77 and China on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Our effective participation in the work of the relevant committees has led to a compromise and middle ground that we hope will lead to the success that has thus far remained out of reach.

We must focus on the suffering of more than 20 million Pakistanis caused by the recent floods, calling on the international community, particularly the super-Powers, to shoulder their responsibilities towards the Pakistani people as well as their responsibility vis-à-vis the impact of climate change in the future and its potential destructive effects. We call upon all Member States to responsibly stand by the sisterly Government of Pakistan with a view to alleviating the suffering of its internally displaced persons.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend our warmest condolences to the Governments and peoples of States that have recently been affected by natural disasters, particularly Pakistan, China, the Russian Federation and Haiti.

It is, of course, a fact that the Arab-Israeli conflict threatens international stability and security. The history of efforts to solve this conflict shows clearly that Israeli recalcitrance and the Israeli Government's settlement policies, as well as its refusal to abide by the internationally legitimate resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative or ensure the legitimate rights of the Palestinians are the main barriers to the achievement of peace.

The international community, in particular the main sponsors of the peace talks and especially the United States, should give Israel one last chance to abide by all of the resolutions, previous agreements and calls relating to the promulgation of peace in addition to the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian State on its soil and the cessation of settlement-building. Furthermore, if Israel continues to reject peace, the Security Council should impose a solution to the conflict in accordance with relevant resolutions of international legitimacy and under Chapter VII of the Charter. Israel must also accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and enter into serious talks with the International Atomic Energy Agency aimed at making the Middle East a region free from weapons of mass destruction and to assert the right of States in the region to the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

Despite the numerous meetings of the Security Council and the International Contact Group on Somalia, the situation in Somalia remains dangerous and threatening to the security and stability of the region. It is regrettable that, given the growing piracy phenomenon, its expansion and its threat to international navigation, the international community has not taken effective steps to support the temporary Somali Government, enable it to build its State and institutions, support its security capacity and army and support the African peacekeeping force. This has made the Somali Government and people feel embittered, having witnessed the non fulfilment by the international community of its commitments and obligations to the Somali Government.

Yemen bears the burden of the outflow of thousands of refugees from the Horn of Africa, most of whom are from Somalia. We are well aware of the effects of the security, political and humanitarian situation in Somalia on Yemen and the region. The United Nations and the Security Council in particular should shoulder their responsibility to restore security and stability to Somalia.

Here, we acknowledge the efforts of the Sudanese Government to bring about the success of dialogue with the opposition forces, and we commend the Qatari mediation efforts to achieve peace in Darfur and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement with the South. Dialogue is the only means to maintain the unity of the Sudan and achieve security and stability there. We call upon all Sudanese parties to shoulder their responsibilities and to effectively participate in the dialogue in a manner that fulfils the high national

interests of the Sudanese people and retains their social integrity and unity.

We call for the revocation of the International Criminal Court warrant against his Excellency President Omer Al Bashir, since this does not respect the sovereignty of the State and impedes efforts to achieve peace in the Sudan.

The parliamentary elections in Iraq reflected the Iraqi people's support for the democratic option and the Iraqi Constitution. We are confident that they will employ dialogue to solve all of their differences and avoid all sectarian and factional conflicts and disputes. We are hopeful that the Iraqi national leadership will agree to the formation of the Government and put Iraq on the road towards development, construction and stability.

The Republic of Yemen hosted a ministerial meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations at the beginning of last month. At that meeting, it was reiterated that it was necessary to strengthen cooperation among its member States in the fields of trade, investment, tourism, culture and education, fisheries; and efforts to combat epidemics, natural disasters, the challenges of climate change and piracy on the high seas.

We also hosted the extraordinary ministerial meeting of the Sana'a Forum for Cooperation, emphasizing the need to achieve security and stability in the Horn of Africa and the south of the Red Sea, and to combat extremism, piracy and terrorism in the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Sea.

We have hosted these and other ministerial and regional meetings based on our desire to achieve collective cooperation in order to maintain peace and security among the peoples of the region and the world, in accordance with the lofty goals of the United Nations.

Despite all the appeals to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the humanitarian themes included in the Goals, the international situation, which has been affected by the financial crisis, the fluctuation of energy prices and natural disasters leading to increases in the price of crops and other foodstuffs, has dissuaded developed countries from fulfilling their obligations to assist and support the least developed countries. There is fear that the specified time frame for achieving the MDGs will pass and the developed countries will not fulfil their obligations towards the developing and least developed countries.

In Yemen, we have positively dealt with these Goals in accordance with our limited capacity. Our Government has adopted a national strategy to eradicate poverty. This has been reflected in our national development plans. We are trying our best, with the cooperation of the international community, to implement this strategy. Our Government has taken a number of measures to increase the allocation of budgetary funds for education and to build more schools as well as to enhance the educational cadres, developing primary education, encouraging education for girls and widening the scope of adult illiteracy reduction. We are trying to improve gender equality and the empowerment of women to participate in political life. We have provided health care for mothers and children, spreading cultural and health awareness. This has led to low infant mortality rates. We have conducted health campaigns to eliminate epidemics and the spread of AIDS.

Yemen suffers from scarce water resources and overpopulation, which adversely affect the sustainability and soundness of the environment. We have therefore made national plans to study the situation, better understand the problems, and protect the environment as part of our national plans for development.

We have spent a great deal on imposing the rule of law and on combating terrorism and other subversive elements. We have taken in more than 700,000 refugees from the Horn of Africa, which has limited our expenditure on development and poverty reduction, on improving the standards of living of our citizens, on providing employment for our youth, on improving education and health care and on the achievement of the MDGs. We therefore call on our friends, partners, international donors and international organizations and financial institutions to help us combat terrorism. They must fulfil their obligations and extend the necessary support to Yemen to help us achieve sustainable development and the socio-economic and political stability to which we aspire.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Avigdor Liberman, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel.

Mr. Liberman (Israel): When I arrived yesterday in New York, I received a phone call from the chairman of one of the Jewish organizations, who asked me how I was coping with all the pressure that is being placed on Israel. "Surely", he said, "it must be very difficult". I recalled an old joke, which tells of five Jews who changed the way we see the world: Moses, law is everything; Jesus, love is everything; Marx, money is everything; Freud, sex is everything; and Einstein, everything is relative. So, I told him that everything is relative. On one hand, it is very difficult. On the other hand, it is easier than before, because now we have a stable coalition and a stable Government and we have the support of a majority of Israel's citizens. We are ready for a fair solution and we are ready to cooperate with the international community. However, we are not ready to compromise our national security or the vital interests of the State of Israel.

At the outset, I want to emphasize that, contrary to what is often presented in the international media, the political arena in Israel is not divided between those who seek peace and those who seek war. Everyone wants peace, and the controversy in Israel centres on the specific question of how to achieve this peace, how to reach security and stability in the region. And the question is: why, in the 17 years since we signed the Oslo Accords, have we not arrived at a comprehensive agreement signifying the end of the conflict and the removal of future mutual claims?

Despite all of the efforts of all the good people with the best of intentions, including Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, Benjamin Netanyahu, Ehud Barak, Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert; despite the summit meetings at Camp David between Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat with the presence of former President Bill Clinton; and despite the Annapolis Summit between Ehud Olmert and Mahmoud Abbas, we are today still in deadlock.

In fact, contrary to the prevalent view that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the heart of the instability in the Middle East or is the main reason for the region's numerous conflicts, the reality is entirely different. More than 90 per cent of the wars and war victims of the Middle East since the Second World War did not result from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and are in no way connected to Israel. Rather, they stem from conflicts involving Muslims or conflicts between Arab States. The Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf war, the wars between North and South Yemen, the Hama atrocities in Syria, and the wars in Algeria and Lebanon — these are just a few examples from a list that goes on and on.

The second flawed explanation for the long-standing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians that has gained popularity is that the root of the problem is the so-called occupation, the settlements in Judea and Samaria and the settlers themselves. Only the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, so the argument goes, will ensure peace in the region.

It is sufficient to state a number of well-known facts in order to refute that claim. First, all of Judea, Samaria and Gaza were under Arab control for 19 years, between 1948 and 1967. During those 19 years, no one tried to create a Palestinian State. Peace agreements were achieved with Egypt and Jordan, despite the presence of settlements. And the opposite is also true: we evacuated 21 flourishing settlements in Gush Katif and transferred more than 10,000 Jews. And, in return, we have Hamas in power and thousands of missiles landing on Sderot and southern Israel.

Another misguided argument is the claim that the Palestinian issue prevents a determined international front against Iran. This argument is not only flawed, it is completely irresponsible. The same argument could be made that the Palestinian issue prevents action on North Korea, piracy in Somalia, the humanitarian crisis in Sudan or the challenge of Afghanistan.

Just as the Khomeini Revolution had nothing to do with the Palestinian issue, neither is the Iranian decision to develop nuclear weapons related. In truth, the connection between Iran and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is precisely the contrary. Iran can exist without Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hizbullah, but the terrorist organizations cannot exist without Iran. Relying on those proxies, Iran can, at any given time, foil any agreement between Israel and the Palestinians or with Lebanon.

Thus, in searching for a durable agreement with the Palestinians, one that will deal with the true roots of the conflict and will endure for many years, one must understand that, first, the Iranian issue must be resolved. One must deal first with the root cause of the problem, and not its symptoms. There are, of course, yet other problems that must be solved; solving that one would not be sufficient, but it is nevertheless a necessary condition.

In trying to resolve the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, we are dealing with two types of problems: emotional problems and practical problems. That is why the solution must also be a two-stage one.

The emotional problems are, first and foremost, the utter lack of confidence between the sides and issues such as Jerusalem, recognition of Israel as the nation-State of the Jewish people, and refugees. Under those conditions, we should focus on coming up with a long-term intermediate agreement, something that could take a few decades. We need to raise an entire new generation that will have mutual trust and will not be influenced by incitement and extremist messages. To achieve a final status agreement, we must understand that the primary practical obstacle is the friction between the two nations.

As is true everywhere, where there are two nations, two religions or two languages with competing claims to the same land, there is friction and conflict. Countless examples of ethnic conflict around the world confirm this, whether in the Balkans, the Caucasus, Africa, the Far East or the Middle East. Where effective separation has been achieved, conflict has either been avoided or has been dramatically reduced or resolved. Consider the cases of the former Yugoslav republics, the split-up of Czechoslovakia and the independence of East Timor as cases in point. Thus, the guiding principle for a final status agreement must not be land-for-peace but rather, exchange of populated territory. Let me be very clear: I am not speaking about moving populations, but rather about moving borders to better reflect demographic realities.

This is not an extraordinary insight and is far less controversial than some may seek to claim. In fact, precisely this notion — that a mismatch between borders and nationalities is a recipe for conflict — has long been accepted as a virtual truism in the academic community. Leading scholars and highly respected research institutions have even coined the term "right-sizing the State" to capture the idea that States and nations must be in balance in order to ensure peace. This is not a controversial political policy. It is an empirical truth.

But beyond empirical truth there is historical truth, namely, the almost 4,000 years during which the Jewish people were born in the land of Israel and developed the corpus of ethical and intellectual treasures that have been instrumental in the rise of Western civilization. The 2,000 years of forced exile and interim conquest by Byzantines, Arabs, Mamelukes, Ottomans and others cannot and never will impair the unbreakable bonds of the Jewish people to its homeland. Israel is not only where we are, it is who we are.

In closing, let me remind everyone in this Hall of the quote on the plaza across from the United Nations, words spoken in Jerusalem almost 3,000 years ago by the Jewish prophet Isaiah:

> "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (*Isaiah 2:4*)

Inspired by the deep wisdom embodied in these words, let us hope that the path to true peace prophesied by Isaiah will guide our two peoples, in two nation-States, living in peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Hor Namhong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Mr. Hor (Cambodia): At the outset, allow me to join the previous speakers in expressing my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Joseph Deiss of Switzerland on his election as President of the sixty-fifth session of our General Assembly. I am confident that under his able leadership our Assembly will be crowned with significant progress on many global issues of international concern. Likewise, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki for the professionalism and dedication with which he conducted the previous session of our General Assembly.

This sixty-fifth session is particularly significant, combining in a timely manner two important high-level meetings, namely, the high-level meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the High-level Review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Those important meetings remind us that there is no better entity than the United Nations to address global challenges and that multilateralism is relevant in addressing the world's interconnected and proliferating

challenges, including the global economic and financial crisis, climate change, food security, international peace and security, regional conflicts and others.

The global economic and financial storm seems to be over, but the task of restoring confidence and promoting economic recovery is far from complete and remains a daunting task, especially for the developing countries. However, achievement of the MDGs is uncertain owing to the fragile economic recovery of those countries. Failure to meet the MDGs by 2015 will leave millions of people locked in the cycle of poverty. Therefore, as the economic recovery continues, a joint effort towards concrete action is needed to further boost confidence and maintain the momentum of global economic growth.

In Cambodia we adopted our own MDGs in 2003, known as Cambodian MDGs and have thus achieved the MDG targets on reducing child mortality and HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. According to a recent study issued by the Overseas Development Institute and the United Nations Millennium Campaign, Cambodia ranks among 20 countries that have made the most absolute progress on the MDGs.

Our world today is facing most serious global challenges. Climate change presents a major threat for every country, although it is more severe for poor countries. Daily, we see an increase in headline news and reports on chaotic weather occurring worldwide, with record heat and cold waves, unusual torrential rains leading to apocalyptic floods and landslides and mudslides that kill hundreds and displace millions of people. Intense forest fires resulting from to extreme heat indicate that Mother Nature is raging.

The confluence of those natural calamities also means that the agricultural sector, which depends largely on weather, has been hit most often, resulting in adverse impacts on food security. All those events have aggravated poverty and led to increased illegal immigration, which has already become a serious human security problem.

Although the much awaited summit of the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen last year failed to achieve a binding agreement, it established a good foundation at the least to enhance international cooperation on a number of key issues, such as deforestation, renewable energy and financial support for the world's poorest countries to mitigate and adapt to climate change. We regret, however, that the pledges have not been actualized.

It is still uncertain whether a binding agreement will be secured in Cancún this year. In particular, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities for developed and developing nations should serve as the foundation for negotiations. Such a principle is key to rebuilding mutual trust among nations, which is the most urgent task needed to achieve a meaningful result at the Cancún Conference. The spirit of compromise is absolutely necessary for the sake of humanity. Climate change has already reached a point of no return.

Cambodia urges developed countries to honour their commitments to provide financial and technological aid to developing nations for the fight against climate change and to take the lead and cut their respective carbon dioxide emissions, so that the Conference in Cancún can produce tangible results. Fruitful outcomes in Cancún will depend on efforts by all to save humankind from much more serious catastrophes. Climate change is not a vital problem of only one country or one region, but of the world as a whole.

Cambodia is pleased to join the group of countries for implementation of the Copenhagen Accord. We have launched our own initiative called the Cambodian Climate Change Alliance, which focuses on capacity-building and strengthening national institutions. Cambodia has also steadily implemented projects aimed at reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and will continue to assume its share of responsibility in curbing carbon dioxide emissions and bringing about adaptation and mitigation measures.

Cambodia believes that the problem of food security also deserves great attention. At the World Summit on Food Security in November 2009 it was disclosed that the number of hungry people had already reached 1 billion. That number will certainly increase day by day with the augmentation of the world population, thus further aggravating food security in the world, particularly in the poorest countries.

The lack of financial resources devoted to agriculture, the lack of access to agrotechnologies and the irrational use of water resources are among the catalysts of the food crisis. At the same time, as a result of recent high fuel oil prices, agricultural land has been diverted to grow bioenergy crops to meet increasing

demand for fuel, while the world population needs more and more food. Furthermore, official development assistance (ODA) has not been sufficiently focused on agricultural production. Therefore, Cambodia hopes that the international community will turn its attention to redirecting and increasing ODA to emphasize food security. At the same time, adequate and timely measures must be taken to address the various obstacles to food security, in order to avoid recurrence of food crises in the future.

In this context, the pledge of $20 billion over three years made at the 2009 Group of Eight Summit in L'Aquila to support agricultural production in poor countries was extremely opportune and offered much hope, not only with regard to narrowing the food shortage but also for progress towards the MDGs and poverty reduction in general. Still, respecting that commitment through timely disbursement and efficient utilization of that funding are absolutely essential. Within Cambodia, food production is the top priority of our Government policy, and agriculture and irrigation are being aggressively promoted as a springboard for broader economic development, with the ambition of turning Cambodia into a more important rice-exporting country.

Peace and security remain issues of grave concern in many parts of the world. Terrorism remains a very serious threat to the world, killing innocent people every day in many parts of the world. The regional security landscape in Asia and the Middle East constitutes a concern for the international community, compelling us to be ever vigilant.

The situation in the Korean peninsula still presents a threat to peace and security in that region. Cambodia earnestly calls on the parties to refrain from any act that could escalate tensions, with a view to promoting conditions that could enable the Six-Party Talks to resume as soon as possible. Peace will prevail only as a result of negotiations aimed at re-establishing the confidence necessary to a peaceful Korean peninsula.

The Israeli-Palestinian issue remains one of the longest and most explosive running conflicts in the Middle East. Year after year the Palestinian people are denied their right to establish a Palestine State living side by side in peace with the people of Israel. Year after year this Assembly urges the parties concerned to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, while the whole world waits impatiently for a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. Cambodia urges both parties to act with utmost restraint and to avoid any act of provocation, in order to pave the way for a peaceful solution.

Cambodia warmly welcomes the recent direct peace talks between the Israeli Prime Minister and the Palestinian President in Washington and in Egypt, as a step in the right direction for bolstering an atmosphere of trust between the two sides. Cambodia shares the view of the international community that new settlements in the West Bank present the main obstacle to efforts towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict. Cambodia hopes that both sides can finally look for a compromise on this crucial issue in order to achieve a breakthrough for the sake of a lasting peace in the Middle East.

With regard to the embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, Cambodia firmly supports the resolutions of our Assembly on the necessity of ending that embargo and calls upon all Members of the United Nations to implement those resolutions in order to end the prolonged suffering of the innocent people of Cuba.

Mr. MacDonald (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Given the very serious emerging global challenges, the United Nations must be ready to fulfil its growing responsibilities to tackle those complex worldwide issues. The functioning of every organ of the United Nations should be readjusted and reinvigorated so as to effectively manage the complexity of the world today to overcome all the challenges in order to build a suitable world for all. Regarding the reform of the United Nations Security Council, Cambodia is of the view that priority should be given to increasing the representation of developing countries, which comprise a vast majority of the United Nations membership. For many years, many have raised the matter of reform, but unfortunately particular interests have prevailed over the world's concerns and prevented the reform from taking place.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Theodore Brent Symonette, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

Mr. Symonette (Bahamas): On behalf of the Government and people of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, I congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, and I assure him of my country's and my delegation's full support and cooperation. I also extend sincere congratulations to his predecessor for his stewardship of this Assembly during the sixty-fourth session.

I also take this opportunity to express condolences on behalf of the Government and the people of the Bahamas to the Government and people of Pakistan for the loss of lives and property sustained as a result of devastating floods affecting their region. The Government and the people of the Bahamas stand in solidarity with Pakistan.

One of the greatest challenges of the global economic and financial crisis has been the loss in speed towards achieving the development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. We are encouraged by the decline in the number of people living in absolute poverty and the reported increased access to primary and secondary education for some. We are mindful that high levels of infant mortality, unsatisfactory reduction in the rate of maternal mortality, continued high incidences of sexual violence against women and a rise in the prevalence of HIV continue to persist in many countries.

The World Health Organization forecasts that between 2006 and 2015, deaths from non-communicable diseases will increase worldwide by some 17 per cent. The increasing risks and high prevalence of non-communicable diseases are exacting heavy tolls on finances and health systems of countries like the Bahamas. Hence we welcome the adoption of resolution 64/265, which calls for a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly next September to address the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

The Bahamas continues to pledge the highest priority on attaining and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We fully expect to achieve most if not all of the goals and targets identified. Still, we are not out of the woods. The fallout from the global economic and financial crisis continues to impact the chief engine and principal employer in our country, tourism, and to slow recovery and expansion in other segments of our economy. My Government has accelerated the implementation of a planned programme of national infrastructure upgrade and expansion, with a view to upgrading the country's infrastructure in order to accommodate new growth and development when the global economy rebounds.

We believe it is critical that greater attention be given to achieving a more transparent international credit rating system that takes fully into account the needs and concerns of developing countries. Greater participation by developing countries is also required in key international norm- and standard-setting bodies in financial regulation and supervision, including the Financial Stability Board and the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision. It is also our view that there is an important role for the United Nations in this process, particularly in the area of institutional strengthening.

We are pleased by the considerable progress made in enhancing our social safety net, expanding unemployment benefits and introducing a national prescription drug programme designed to ensure that the most vulnerable sectors of our society — infants and school-age children, and the elderly — receive prescription medication, regardless of their ability to pay. And we are also pleased that, notwithstanding forced reductions in Government expenditures across the board, every child in the Bahamas continues to be assured of a place in Government-operated schools, from primary to high school.

Overshadowing our successes is the ever-present threat posed by climate change. The Bahamas is the fifth most vulnerable country to rising sea levels. We are a country of negligible greenhouse gases and negligible gas emissions; still, we will suffer catastrophic results if emissions are not stabilized and reduced worldwide. Indeed, science demonstrates that a two degree Celsius change in temperature will result in a sea-level rise of more than two metres. Such an occurrence would submerge 80 per cent of our territory.

The Bahamas therefore joins with other small island developing States (SIDS) in reiterating the call to the international community, and particularly to developed countries, to undertake urgent and decisive action to significantly reduce emissions of all greenhouse gases, and also to implement fast action strategies. We similarly call for increased financial and technological support of SIDS, and our particularly vulnerable countries, as we struggle to adapt to the

adverse impacts of climate change. As such, we look forward with considerable anticipation to the December Conference in Cancún.

The Bahamas draws attention to the importance of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, as that programme remains the blueprint for action on sustainable development for SIDS, as was subsequently reaffirmed in the Mauritius Strategy. In the Bahamas we have an unwavering political commitment to sustainability as the cardinal principle for national development strategies. And in the area of biodiversity, significant achievements have been made in establishing and expanding marine, coastal and terrestrial protected areas. We are also well along with the development of a national energy policy, with potential for renewable energy.

It is impossible for my country to note the high incidence of catastrophic natural disasters being experienced around the world and not acknowledge the plight of our great neighbour, Haiti. Haiti and its people are a priority concern for the Bahamas and the Caribbean Community subregion, as they are for the entire international community. None of us, however, were under any illusion that the recovery and reconstruction of Haiti, in the wake of the devastating January earthquake, would be anything less than a Herculean task. In the immediate aftermath of the disaster, billions of dollars were pledged and the wider community of nations vowed to stay the course and work to ensure that Haiti gained a footing on the path to sustainable growth and development.

There has been some progress in Haiti over the past nine and a half months — but not nearly enough. Millions of internally displaced people continue to languish in makeshift tent cities, with inadequate shelter or protection, and most of the rubble from that January earthquake still lies where it fell. It is imperative, therefore, that the United Nations continue in its pivotal role of mobilizing international assistance for Haiti and assisting with the recovery and reconstruction.

International peace and security remain a concern to all of us. The recently held second review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy underscored that we must renew our efforts to combat terrorism in an effective and integrated manner. I reiterate my Government's commitment to full implementation of the Strategy and renew the call for completion of negotiations on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. The Bahamas is a full partner in the international fight to combat terrorism and other transnational criminal activities. We currently serve as Chair of the Inter American Committee against Terrorism. We were also pleased to host this past June a subregional workshop on counter-terrorism financing, organized by the Organization of American States in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

The Security Council is central to international efforts aimed at fostering peace and improving security around the globe. We believe that the Council's efforts in this regard would be strengthened if its composition better reflected the geopolitical realities of the world. Towards that end, the Bahamas lends its voice to the call for increased urgency in efforts to make the Security Council more representative, accountable, democratic and transparent.

Crime and threats to security continue to occupy the minds of the people of the Bahamas and indeed of the Caribbean subregion. International traffic in illicit drugs and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons have for many years disrupted the lives of peace-loving citizens of the Caribbean. Governments like my own have been required to dedicate increased portions of our annual budgets to the fight against crime. The seemingly unlimited resources of the illegal cartels continue to render our efforts insufficient. Hence, we look forward with anticipation to the 2012 Conference, whose objective is the conclusion of an arms trade treaty. We fully endorse, in that regard, calls from fellow Caribbean countries for the treaty to be comprehensive in scope, with provisions for all categories of weapons.

My Government also confirms its commitment to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We were pleased with the outcome document of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States (A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3), which was adopted by consensus in June.

I record the appreciation of my Government for the technical assistance recently received from the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Latin America and the Caribbean in the area of firearms destruction and stockpile

management. We look forward always to assistance in the future.

The Bahamas applauds the General Assembly's proclamation of the year beginning on 12 August 2010 as the International Year of Youth, under the theme of dialogue and mutual understanding. We believe that the overwhelming majority of our young people are creative and law-abiding citizens. They will doubtless contribute and be a credit to their community and their country. Regrettably, however, a significant minority, not unlike troubled youth throughout the world, find it difficult to overcome the challenges presented by poverty, weak educational achievement, risky social behaviours, including drug and alcohol abuse, criminal activity and rising unemployment.

A recent report of the International Labour Organization found that young people aged 15 to 24 accounted for 22 per cent of the increase in the number of unemployed persons since the beginning of 2007. My Government is therefore seeking to further expand educational programmes and career-oriented training opportunities for our youth by enhancing our secondary school curriculum and by strengthening the programmes available at the Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute.

The Bahamas welcomes efforts by the Organization to continue to bring focus to women's issues. We applaud the adoption of resolution 64/289, which established a new gender entity — UN Women.

We also applaud the recent launch of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Human trafficking is a growing phenomenon in our region and is increasingly a challenge for us in the Bahamas, as we are an archipelagic nation with porous borders. My Government is therefore committed to combating that activity and to intercepting and prosecuting to the fullest extent of the law those engaged in it.

Building on its ratification in 2008 of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, the Bahamas enacted child protection and trafficking legislation specially designed to work on counter-trafficking. We are fortunate that financing has been made available to representatives of relevant Government agencies and key stakeholders.

The Bahamas believes that the United Nations is working diligently under its mandate to facilitate increased international dialogue, realizing the noble goals set out in its Charter. The Bahamas has taken note of the Secretary-General's announcement of a High-level Panel on Global Sustainability as a blueprint for a liveable, prosperous and sustainable future for all.

My delegation fully endorses the Secretary-General in his assertion that the time for narrow agendas and narrow thinking is over. As an Organization, we must continue to chart a course that will enable us to meet unprecedented global challenges and translate our efforts into actions for the benefit of all. The rhetoric must become reality. We all have a contribution to make in realizing the goals and objectives of the United Nations, based on the purposes and principles outlined in the Charter.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nyan Win, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar.

Mr. Win (Myanmar) (*spoke in Burmese; English text provided by the delegation*): May I, on behalf of the Myanmar delegation and on my own behalf, begin by extending to the President our warm congratulations on his well-deserved election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. We are confident that under his wise and able leadership our deliberations will produce fruitful results. Allow me also to express my delegation's appreciation to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

There is no doubt that the United Nations is the best forum for practising multilateralism to address the challenges facing the world today. The near-universal participation of the world's nations in this global body is a living testimony to that. At the heart of its Charter lies the maintenance of international peace and security as the main noble purpose of the United Nations, which all Member States are committed to strive for.

While the United Nations has been devoting the larger portion of its attention to maintaining international peace and security, new forms of global challenges such as climate change, poverty, hunger, water and energy insecurity have emerged and demand the international community's urgent and careful attention. At the same time, humankind's shared dream of making the world a prosperous, peaceful, just and

secure place remains elusive. The world today remains full of inequality, injustice, conflict, instances of the use of force, interference in the internal affairs of States and attempts to impose domination on developing nations.

Against that backdrop, the pre-eminent role of the United Nations in advancing peace, security and development must be asserted and enhanced in order to effectively address those daunting challenges. We therefore wish to stress the pressing need for strengthening the United Nations with speedy reform measures, adapting it to present-day realities in order to make it more democratic and effective in meeting growing challenges.

Myanmar firmly believes that any reform effort must be aimed at strengthening the central role of the United Nations in global governance. We share the widespread view that the United Nations must be reformed to reflect its increasing membership and to push for internal reform measures, including revitalization of the General Assembly and reform of the Security Council. We share the view that the reform of the Council must be designed to make it more transparent, more efficient and more accountable. We also support the idea of expanding both categories of Council membership.

With only five years remaining before the target deadline, the international community must step up its efforts to realize the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. We therefore welcome the successful convening of the High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs and its sideline activities last week here in New York. While important improvements have been made globally, progress towards achieving our MDG targets is not sufficient as yet.

Progress remains uneven and varies from region to region. While national Governments have the primary responsibility to ensure progress, the international community must help by creating an environment that would enable developing countries to make greater strides on their road to development. International assistance plays an important catalytic role in the developing countries' efforts to attain their development goals.

We therefore wish to emphasize here that fulfilment by developed countries of their official development assistance commitments, increased investment flows, market access and resolution of debt problems are essential to enabling the developing countries to realize their MDG targets. It is high time that the unjust and coercive economic measures and trade embargoes that are hampering the attainment of the MDGs and the development of the developing countries, and thus hurting the people, be removed.

We are pleased to report that despite challenges, Myanmar has made certain progress towards achieving most of the eight MDGs in varying degrees, especially in areas such as poverty alleviation, food security and the promotion of education and health.

As a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone, Myanmar has all along recognized the legitimate right of every State to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, we firmly oppose the proliferation or production of nuclear weapons and strongly support any efforts leading to realization of the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Therefore we heartily welcomed the signing of the New START treaty by the leaders of the United States and the Russian Federation with a view to reducing their respective nuclear arsenals. It gave us hope and expectation with respect to the elimination of nuclear weapons and further reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms. We also join others in calling for the early entry into force and full implementation of the New START treaty.

In our noble fight against growing transnational crime and terrorism, no single country can act alone, as it requires a global solution and concerted action by the world's nations. Myanmar unequivocally condemns all forms and manifestation of terrorism. We are working closely with the international community to strengthen our efforts and cooperation in regional and multilateral frameworks in order to prevent and combat terrorism and transnational crime, such as illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in persons and cybercrime. We are also working together with fellow members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to step up efforts to deal with prevention, control, preparedness and response to pandemic diseases in our region.

The issue of climate change has become a pressing global challenge that threatens humankind. The environmental problem knows no national boundaries; no country can be insulated from the consequences of climate change. The unprecedented

frequency and severity of recent natural disasters, such as the earthquake in Haiti, floods in China and Pakistan and heat waves around the world, clearly testify to the consequences of global climate change.

Myanmar was also a victim of climate change in May 2008, when it was hit by the devastating Cyclone Nargis, the strongest ever in our history. After more than two years we are pleased to say that we have now passed the emergency relief stage and successfully rebuilt better in the affected areas through our massive reconstruction efforts, together with the United Nations, ASEAN and the international community. I wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the international community for all the humanitarian assistance to Myanmar in response to that natural disaster.

In addressing the pressing global issue of climate change we must redouble our efforts not only to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions but also to provide financial resources and technology to developing countries so that they might take effective mitigation and adaptation measures. Although industrialized countries are mainly responsible for climate change, the developing countries are the most severely affected by its consequences. Myanmar therefore believes that any approach to address climate change must be based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

We therefore look forward to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Cancún, Mexico, later this year. We hope the negotiations in that Conference will result in fruitful outcomes that will translate into concrete action on commitments made by the developed countries to reduce substantive emissions and to assist developing countries in their mitigation and adaptation efforts.

May I take this opportunity to briefly apprise this Assembly of ongoing political developments in my country, Myanmar.

Today, Myanmar is at a critical phase of its political transformation. The multiparty-democracy general elections are set to be held on 7 November 2010, as the fifth step of our charted political road map. A total of 37 political parties, including those representing various ethnic nationalities and groups, will take part. Over 3,000 candidates will contest for a total of 1,171 seats in the Peoples' Parliament, the National Parliament and state/regional parliaments. Such a large participation has made it crystal clear that the elections have become virtually inclusive. Political parties have already started their campaign activities. The people will exercise their democratic right to elect the representatives of their choice who can best serve their interests.

Based upon its ample experience and lessons learned in holding multiparty general elections, Myanmar is confident of its ability to conduct the elections in an orderly manner. Whatever challenges may face us, we are committed to do our best to hold successful, free and fair general elections in the best interest of the country and its people.

As our new State Constitution subscribes to the present foreign policy, we believe that the new Government to emerge after the elections will continue to embrace the policy of maintaining and strengthening friendly relations with all nations and will work closely with the United Nations. Myanmar looks forward to strengthening closer engagements with the international community in the post election era.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. George Yeo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore.

Mr. Yeo (Singapore): Although the global economic situation has improved considerably, it is still fragile. Much of the relief has come from the massive liquidity that has been pumped into the global financial system by national Governments. That bought us time to restructure our economies and correct the underlying imbalances that led to the crisis in the first place.

Whether the restructuring is happening fast enough is, however, still an open question. The economist Joseph Schumpeter viewed economic downturns as the system renewing itself, a process he described as creative destruction. In theory, that sounds good. In practice, it is difficult for political leaders to stand idly by when companies go bust and jobs are lost. Everyone likes the creative part. Destruction, however, can mean losing an election, which politicians invariably try to avoid.

The repricing of production factors such as real estate and labour is politically sensitive in any country, and Governments get blamed for it. Adjusting relative factor costs through the exchange rate is usually easier to achieve, although currency devaluation can create

other problems such as inflation. The argument over fair exchange rates in the world today reflects competing domestic pressures to ease the pain of restructuring in different countries. Thus the United States wants China to revalue the yuan renminbi, while China protests that it is being blamed for the economic weaknesses of other countries.

Of course, if the whole world were to use the same currency, the only way countries would be able to adjust would be through improved productivity and repricing. Exchange rate adjustments can facilitate structural adjustment, provided that the deeper economic problems are also tackled. With the world becoming multipolar, global macroeconomic coordination has become more complicated. Recognizing the inability of the Group of Seven or the Group of Eight to achieve such coordination, the Group of 20 (G-20) was formed two years ago when the global economy stared into an abyss after the collapse of Lehman Brothers. Without the G-20 acting in concert, the economic crisis could well have led to a global depression. The G-20 — the members of which collectively account for some 85 per cent of total global gross domestic product — is therefore a vital grouping in the community of nations.

Going forward, the G-20 has to go beyond the reform of international financial institutions and better coordination of fiscal, monetary and exchange rate policies. Without fundamental restructuring of the real economy, we may experience a double dip. Without fundamental restructuring, increased liquidity in the global system will end up creating new asset bubbles, some of which we already see forming in Asia. For this restructuring to take place, the international trading system must be kept open. Only then can markets make adjustments and prices find their right levels. In fighting protectionism in all its forms, the leadership of the G-20 is critical. If, for lack of political will, the G-20 is unable to avert the crisis of a second dip, crisis will in the end force it to act, and by then it will be at much greater human cost to all of us.

For precisely that reason, we must not allow interest in the Doha Development Agenda to flag. When the Doha Round was launched in November 2001, a key consideration was development. For many of us who were in Doha during the negotiations, the Millennium Development Goals were uppermost in our minds. I remember Tanzanian trade minister Iddi Simba insisting, on behalf of the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, that the word "development" be explicitly incorporated into the name of the new round.

It has been 10 years since the Millennium Development Goals were launched. While some countries have done well, many others have not. The G-20 countries must take into account, in their deliberations, the interest of all countries, not only of their own. The G-20, which together accounts for 80 per cent of international trade, has to play a leadership role in breaking the current impasse in the Doha negotiations. In particular, we must ensure that the needs of developing countries, especially the needs of the least developed countries (LDCs), are met. Freeing up agricultural trade, for example, will make a huge difference to their welfare.

With those concerns in mind, a loose grouping of countries calling itself the Global Governance Group, or 3G, was established more than a year ago. Its objectives were spelled out in a document circulated to the Members of the United Nations on 1 March. The basic stance of the Group is to support the work of the G-20 and hold it accountable to the general membership of the United Nations. Permanent Representatives within the 3G Group meet regularly in New York, including before and after G-20 meetings, to present views and make suggestions, which are circulated to everyone at the United Nations. Depending on the subjects discussed, we invite individual members of the G-20 to join us at our meetings. For example, in preparation for the coming G-20 Summit in Seoul, the 3G Group had several meetings with senior Korean officials, including their G-20 "Sherpa", to convey some of our views and concerns.

A major concern of the countries of the Group is development. In this regard, we have prepared inputs to be submitted to the G-20 working group on development. It is good that both Korea as the current Chair of the G-20 and France as the incoming Chair are pushing development on the agenda.

Let us be clear at the outset that development is not principally about aid. Whether a people is able to lift itself from the depths of poverty depends more on internal than external factors. Good governance is, of course, paramount. Investing in the inherent potential of citizens and creating a favourable environment for that potential to be realized are central to good governance. We would like to commend President

Deiss on his decision to make "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance" the theme of this General Assembly. It is most timely.

A critical element in good governance is education. With education, individuals are able to acquire the information and knowledge they need to add value to the world. Aid that helps a people to build up its internal strength is valuable. Aid that creates dependency is harmful. With education, a citizenry is more able to insist on democratic safeguards against the abuse of power and corruption. Taking full advantage of globalization and information technology, we can now spread education into remote corners of the world.

One of the most important developments in the world today is the widespread availability of cheap mobile phones, often with built-in cameras. Mobile phones have altered traditional power relationships everywhere where they are available. No longer can individuals be kept ignorant and exploited for long, because they have alternatives. As smart phones fall in price — which they are bound to do — social networking infrastructures like Facebook, which already has half a billion users in the world, will radically change the world we live in. Without being planned for or financed by any national Government, Facebook is arguably the most important social infrastructure in the world today. It is an astonishing phenomenon. Yet, it is only one wave of many more waves to come.

Whether we like it or not, the revolution in technology — not only information technology but also in genetics, material science and other fields — will cause the creative destruction that many politicians dread. Communities and Governments that work with technological change will surge ahead, while those fighting change will be left behind. In this new age, those who are wedded to dogma and ideology become stuck in the past. Therefore, when we talk about development, the key is education.

We must make sure that basic conditions are met, that children are fed and healthy and that no group is discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity, religion or gender. The knowledge needed for development is already available in the world, and delivery systems can be readily put into place.

Unfortunately, there are many obstacles impeding the flow of knowledge. Protectionism is a major obstacle. It slows the spread of education and knowledge. Throughout history, every time a new trade route is established, knowledge flows along it, enabling the relatively backward to catch up. Our inability to move the Doha Development Agenda forward is particularly injurious to LDCs.

An important way to help communities acquire more knowledge and use information better is to foster the growth of liveable cities. To develop, countries have to urbanize, and in the coming decades large parts of the world will be urbanized on every continent. China during Mao Zedong's time was 20 per cent urban. Today, it is almost half urban. In 20 years' time it will reach the same level of urbanization as Taiwan or countries like Korea and Japan, which are over 90 per cent urban.

Urbanization as an organic process of development can be healthy or unhealthy. Cities can be energy-efficient, knowledge-intensive centres of production, education and sustainable living, or they can be hellholes festering with poor education, unemployment, inequality, crime and pollution. Because of the specific challenges that we had to overcome in our own development, Singapore has been promoting the sharing of urban developmental experiences as a practical way to help countries develop in areas such as public administration, low-cost housing, water management, transportation planning and better logistics. Developing countries that are urbanizing rapidly — and they have to do so in order to develop — should not have to repeat the mistakes of those who have gone before them.

All of us have a vested interest in the growth of liveable cities in the third world. For example, carbon emissions cannot be reduced without healthy urbanization. We hope that fostering liveable cities will become a major objective of the G-20 countries. The best form of aid we can provide is knowledge and training. Two years ago, Singapore signed an agreement with the World Bank to establish an urban hub for the dissemination of knowledge about liveable cities.

A basic requirement for healthy urban development is good water management, which has become a major challenge in various parts of the world. We should do much more to learn from one another's experiences, especially in the face of growing weather volatility. Last Friday, Slovenia convened a

Green Group meeting involving a small group of countries to discuss the subject of water management, which we hope will be given more attention in the future.

Despite the concerns about the global economy, never before have the prospects of bringing development into every continent been so promising. This is not to say that outcomes will be equalized. Human beings as individuals and in groups are competitive by nature, and we must expect that some will do better than others at any point in time. Indeed, by learning from the successes and mistakes of front-runners, human communities often leapfrog over one another, and this is a historical process. Competition, however, should be conducted in a civilized way and within an overall global framework and value system that recognizes our global humanity and destiny.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Walid Al Moualem, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Al-Moualem (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss personally, as well as his country, Switzerland, on his election to the presidency of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. His experience and competence qualify him to ably discharge his responsibilities, and I wish him every success in his endeavours. I also thank his predecessor, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, and extend to him and his fraternal country our appreciation for his skilful stewardship of the work of the General Assembly during the previous session. I would also like to express to the Secretary-General our appreciation and wishes for success in fulfilling the tasks entrusted to him.

The Middle East region has been rife with tensions for many decades. It has survived major events and numerous wars. The policies, interests and trends that have unfolded on its soil have converged at times but clashed at others. Due to its geographic location, the Middle East influences neighbouring countries in Asia, Europe and Africa and is, in turn, influenced by them. Syria, which lies at the heart of the Middle East, has experienced these tensions, policies, events and outcomes and has reacted to them.

This fact — which has spelled both positive and negative consequences for the Syrian Arab Republic — prompted us to define our perspective in addressing external issues, particularly the nature of our international relations. Safeguarding and sustaining Syrian and Arab interests is our priority. Therefore, our door remains open for an in depth and meaningful dialogue aimed at reconciling differences with others and reaching common ground on the basis of which progress can be made. That was our response when Syria endured attempts to isolate and blockade it, a response we reaffirm today as Syria discharges its role as a major player in matters related to the security and stability of the region. We believe that civilized international relations must be built on openness and dialogue as opposed to insularity, isolation, confrontation and aggression. This is our approach, which we hope will prevail in a world driven by multiple interests and perspectives, overwhelmed by problems and complications, yet at the same time sustained by hopes and noble visions.

The world has declared that it is determined to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, and has stressed that peace is an urgent prerequisite for the maintenance of security and stability in the region. In Israel, there is much talk about peace, yet the drums of war continue to sound. Land appropriation for settlement-building goes on unabated. Peace negotiations, we are told, are currently under way on the basis of the two-State solution, but settlement activities are about to make this two-State solution a dead letter that stands no chance of survival. Israel is intensely pursuing its Judaization plans for Jerusalem in order to depopulate it of its Palestinian inhabitants. Israeli actions threaten the safety of Jerusalem's holy sites. Through settlement activities, actions and declarations concerning Jerusalem, Israel pursues a fait accompli policy on the basis of which it imposes its will regardless of whether negotiations continue or stall.

Peace can be genuine only if there is a genuine will to make peace. That is the litmus test. Political manoeuvres during negotiations under the umbrella of the desire for peace strain and exacerbate the situation and may make it more volatile and explosive.

Syria seeks a just and comprehensive peace achieved through the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the Arab Peace Initiative. Our position has been known and declared for years. We have the will to make peace and we are the masters of our decision, which is unwavering. The occupied Syrian Golan is not negotiable nor is it a bargaining chip. Recognition of

the fact that it must be returned fully is the basis on which peacemaking arrangements should be made. Syria is ready to resume peace negotiations from the point where they stopped, through the Turkish mediator, if it finds in Israel a partner committed to the terms of reference of peacemaking, and if that partner has the political will to achieve peace.

We note with satisfaction the objective opinion of the report of the Human Rights Council fact-finding mission investigating the Israeli attack on the freedom flotilla that was headed to Gaza on an exclusively humanitarian mission (A/HRC/15/21). We look forward to the conclusions to be drawn from the report of the international commission now that the necessary legal grounds and supporting evidence have been established by the Human Rights Council's fact-finding mission.

Syria is a fraternal Arab neighbour of Iraq. For us, Iraq thus remains a subject of interest and a cause for concern, particularly when the situation there deteriorates. We embrace any improvement in conditions there with a major sense of relief. The restoration of Iraq's full sovereignty and independence, the preservation of its Arab and Islamic identity, the unity of its people and its territorial integrity are of utmost priority for our approach towards Iraq and its future. Undoubtedly, national unity remains the cornerstone of a secure, prosperous and strong Iraq.

We have called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Iraq. In this context, the partial withdrawal of the American forces from Iraq constitutes, in our view, a positive first step in the direction of Iraq's assumption of its power over its own affairs and the restoration of its full sovereignty over its territories. We hope that Iraq will ultimately develop strong military and security capabilities to safeguard its internal security and safety as an independent and sovereign State.

It should be reiterated that Iraqi security is contingent upon its national unity and is based on its Arab-Islamic identity and the principle of the participation of all segments of Iraqi society in building their country's present and future. Syria is willing to cooperate with Iraq in every aspect to serve Iraq's interests and the common interests of our two fraternal countries.

My country has been advocating the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East since 2003, a demand we included in a draft resolution we presented to the Security Council at the time. We continue to stress that Israel must be made to comply with international decisions calling on it to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to submit its nuclear installations to the comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards regime. Israel's accession to the Treaty is of extreme significance for the security and stability of our region.

We often wonder why some States talk about the universality of the NPT but hasten to make strenuous efforts to shelter Israel from the Agency's oversight. They are encouraging Israel to continue to develop its nuclear military programme, which is a cause of concern to the people of the region. Furthermore, this policy of double standards runs counter to the non-proliferation prerequisites, not only in the Middle East region, but also in the world at large.

We reaffirm that all States have the right to acquire nuclear technology for peaceful uses, as guaranteed by the NPT. We also call for the peaceful resolution of all disputes relevant to this aspect through dialogue.

Syria follows the developments in the Sudan because we are dedicated to the Sudan's unity, sovereignty, security and stability. In that context, we are grateful to the State of Qatar, the League of Arab States and the African Union for their efforts. We also appreciate and support the African Union's efforts in settling disputes in the Sudan and other conflict zones on the African continent, and in promoting Africa's role within the international system.

We also strongly reiterate our call to lift the embargo that has been imposed on Cuba for decades.

The world has suffered numerous natural disasters this year resulting from climate change and global warming. We all know that these disasters are but a prelude to more severe and wider-scale calamities that could well threaten natural life on this planet. We have an obligation towards nature, yet we have exceeded all limits in abusing it.

Many countries have chosen to ignore the warnings of scientists and the ominous signals from nature. We must rise to this serious challenge and assume our historic responsibility, so as to make up for past imbalances and shortcomings.

We look forward to an expression of international solidarity in Cancún, Mexico, based on scientific evidence and on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It is our hope that the Cancún outcome will take into account the priorities of sustainable development in order to arrive at a comprehensive and legally binding post-2012 framework agreement. We believe that it is extremely important to address the shortcomings of Copenhagen and to renew the commitment to the Bali Action Plan and the premises of the Kyoto Protocol.

The painful situation in Pakistan, a typical symptom of climate change, is yet another example of the devastating disasters that we must expect unless we work seriously and collectively to address this grave situation. The people and Government of my country, Syria, wholeheartedly sympathize with Pakistan and other disaster-stricken countries. I stress the urgent need for States to increase assistance to Pakistan, both in cash and in kind, to mitigate the tragic and widespread damage there and prevent any further exacerbation of the situation.

We aspire to a better, more just and secure world and look forward to strengthening and revitalizing the role of the United Nations and guaranteeing respect for international law. We must not forget, though, that our planet Earth is home to the world we are aspiring to build. This home is besieged by an ominous phenomenon, climate change, which entails tragic consequences for humanity. This year was only a prelude to what is yet to come. We sincerely hope that the Cancún conference will be the herald of a direly needed rescue effort.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Muhammad Mumuni, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of Ghana.

Mr. Mumuni (Ghana): Let me begin by congratulating the President of the Assembly on his election to lead the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. I trust that he will, with his outstanding experience and excellent diplomatic skills, steer this Assembly to a successful conclusion. I also wish to thank his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for the efficient and able manner with which he presided over the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

Ghana subscribes to the declaration by the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government that designated 2010 as a year of peace and security. Ghana will, therefore, continue to engage other member States in the search for peace and security in places on the African continent that have known no peace, and we will contribute to renewed global efforts to prevent conflicts through preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

As we witness a decline in the number of the violent conflicts that afflicted many countries over the past decade or more, it is time to renew our commitment to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in order to ensure that countries emerging from conflict do not relapse into violence. Ghana was privileged to have served on the organizational committee of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and will remain actively involved in the pursuit of the attainment of the strategic objectives set for the post-conflict countries on the agenda of the Commission's country-specific configuration. In this regard, Ghana supports the steps being taken to also place Liberia on the agenda of the Commission.

As agreed by world leaders in 2005, Ghana strongly supports the principle of the responsibility to protect as the normative framework to prevent and deter the occurrence of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing, which have occurred in many countries that were emerging from conflict. While the fear of its abuse does not take away the intrinsic value of the principle of the responsibility to protect, caution must be exercised in order to avoid its abuse. The principle is not intended to undermine the sovereignty of States; on the contrary, it is to ensure that sovereign responsibility is exercised in a manner that will prevent a repetition of the mass atrocities that were experienced in places like Rwanda, Srebrenica, Cambodia and Sierra Leone, with devastating impacts on neighbouring countries.

Sadly, in many places, some of those conflicts persist in varying degrees of intensity. The international community must be ready and willing to assist national authorities who request such assistance with a view to developing or enhancing the capacity of countries that are manifestly unable or unwilling to uphold this responsibility to do so. To that end, we welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a joint office to coordinate United Nations system-wide efforts to strengthen early warning mechanisms aimed at ensuring timely and decisive preventive action and/or intervention in appropriate cases, in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

While the reduction of extreme poverty and hunger is a major development challenge for Africa, most countries in the region are also grappling with the problems of climate change, a high disease burden, poor infrastructure, brain drain and the lack of development of productive capacity. In the last few years, African countries have had to deal with the effects of rising food and energy prices and the complications arising from the global financial and economic crisis. Those multiple crises have not only reversed impressive recent progress in economic performance, but are also jeopardizing efforts by African countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

It is gratifying to see that the interests of the international community in climate change have increased markedly in recent times, especially after the adoption of the Bali Action Plan in 2007. We need to sustain that interest and build on the common ground that was first found in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, with the establishment of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and was subsequently built on in Berlin, Kyoto, Marrakech, Bali, Copenhagen and, soon, Cancún.

There are issues that need to be addressed for progress in Cancún and beyond. What is missing is a demonstrable political will. Without that, countries will not see the need to raise their ambitions to cut emissions. Industrialized countries have made pledges to cut emissions by 2020. However commendable those commitments may be, they fall short of the 25 to 40 per cent cut that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says will give the world a chance of staying below the recommended two-degree average global temperature rise.

We need to preserve the Kyoto Protocol, which is currently the only existing international agreement with legal status to verify emission reductions. That is why it is critical for all parties to work together to address the divisions over a second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol and ensure its continuity after 2012.

Just as there was "aid fatigue", developing countries may soon be experiencing "promise fatigue". We must get the numerous pledges out of the fine print and make them work for humanity. I am simply appealing to industrialized nations to fulfil their funding pledges, including the $30 billion in fast-track financing for developing country adaptation and mitigation efforts through 2012, and the pledge to raise $100 billion a year by 2020. For developing countries, the early delivery and transparent allocation of that money will boost our confidence in the dialogue and show that industrialized countries are truly committed to progress in the broader negotiations.

We have made progress in the implementation of the MDG agenda. However, keeping the solemn promise we made in 2000 and achieving the Goals by 2015 will require intensified efforts, much more resources and effective cooperation. No one should be oblivious to the enormous challenges African and other developing countries face in their efforts to achieve the MDGs.

Ghana will not compromise under any guise in its pursuit of good governance and the promotion of the rule of law, as these are important prerequisites for achieving sustainable social and economic development. African countries themselves have come to acknowledge that part of the reason for their impoverishment could be ascribed to poor post-independence governance practices. That is why most African countries have taken steps to consolidate their governance institutions, including strengthening the electoral system.

Food security is a national priority for Ghana. For most Ghanaians, getting enough good-quality food at affordable prices is a major concern. The Government is therefore implementing a progressive agricultural policy that will ensure increased production, especially in staples and other food crops that our climate and land can efficiently support.

Ghana will soon become an important producer of oil and gas. The focus of the Government is to ensure that Ghanaians will derive the maximum benefit from oil production. Although oil revenues will start to flow around the fourth quarter of the year, the Government is taking measures to ensure accountability and transparency in the management of revenue from oil production. To that end, an oil and gas revenue management bill has been submitted to Parliament for approval. In addition, the Government is holding a series of consultations with several countries and private operators who have expertise and experience in the field so that their knowledge can be tapped and best practices adopted.

In our efforts to create wealth and prosperity for our citizens, Ghana has made attracting foreign investment an important pillar in its development strategies. We will continue to pursue such policies in the belief that our efforts will be supported and rewarded with genuine partnership.

Africa is tired of the misery and poverty arising from resource-induced violent conflicts. Africa wants to use its oil and natural resources to create wealth for its citizens. We call on the United Nations and well-meaning development partners, including the international business community, to support our efforts to nip the so-called resource curse in the bud and exploit our God-given natural endowments for development.

Whereas the international environment for growth in Africa is still favourable, the risks posed by global imbalances and external shocks, such as the recent financial crisis, call for increased international policy coordination. We need a renewed spirit of solidarity and commitment for a comprehensive global response if we are to confront the challenges of our time.

It is in that light that Ghana wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the ideals of the United Nations and continue to live up to its Charter obligations, including playing an active role in international peacekeeping, in order to assist the Organization in its task of maintaining global peace and security and promoting fruitful and beneficial cooperation among Member States. We must resolve to muster the political will to strengthen the United Nations so that it can function effectively and redeem the majority of our peoples from wars, diseases and poverty by providing the financial and material resources required to discharge those onerous responsibilities.

It is only when we measure up to those responsibilities that we can give meaning to the phrase "We the peoples of the United Nations".

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Mr. Qureshi (Pakistan): I wish to congratulate the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session on his election. As one of the Vice-Presidents at this session, we assure him of our full support and cooperation. I also take this opportunity to convey profound gratitude and appreciation to my brother, Ali Treki, the outgoing President, for his able leadership during the sixty-fourth session. Pakistan owes him gratitude for his timely initiative to convene a plenary meeting of the Assembly on the humanitarian emergency arising from the floods in Pakistan (see A/64/PV.110).

I come to the Assembly at a difficult time in Pakistan's history. The recent flash floods — the worst in living memory — have left behind a trail of death and destruction. Precious lives have been lost, millions of acres of crops have been washed away, homes have been destroyed and livelihoods have been lost. We are grateful to the United Nations, our development partners and other friends in the international community for standing up with us in this difficult hour and for their important contribution in supporting rescue and relief operations in Pakistan.

The Government remains focused in its resolve to address the challenges posed by that humanitarian crisis. We are determined to rebuild a better and vibrant Pakistan and to do so in a transparent and accountable manner. The resilience of our people should enable us to achieve that.

We live in an ever more interconnected and interdependent world, a world where our fate and destinies are interwoven like never before, a world where it is increasingly difficult to maintain islands of peace and prosperity while conflicts, oppression and adversity fester. We live in a world where dividends of peace are shared as easily as the fallout of adversity or instability.

Today, we face an integrated onslaught of a series of new and emerging challenges that seriously threaten economic growth and development, social cohesion and environmental protection in our countries. We clearly have reached a decisive moment. We will have to make wise and well-considered choices that bring peace and prosperity to our world at present while protecting and preserving it for future generations.

The response is simple: global problems require global solutions. The world needs a new multilateral approach that truly subscribes to the values and principles that we, the peoples of the United Nations, signed on to 65 years ago.

The United Nations Charter envisages a world where equity is valued as much as entitlement, where inclusiveness replaces exclusiveness, where dialogue and collaboration define engagement, where transparency and openness guide business and decision-making in global institutions. Full and unconditional adherence to those values and principles is what will put us on the road to durable peace and security and sustained economic growth. As the primus inter pares, the United Nations is the only and truly universal multilateral Organization that enjoys the credibility, legitimacy and universal acceptability to realize that — which is also its raison d'être.

Pakistan supports comprehensive reform of the Security Council to make it more representative, equitable, transparent and accountable. Council reform must be guided by the principles of equality and democracy, which could conform to a dynamic future, one not entrenched in the historical mistakes and individual privileges of the past. We should look for an outcome that unites and does not divide the membership, one that strengthens and does not weaken the Organization. Our collective search should culminate in a consensus solution that corresponds to the interest of the entire membership, particularly small and medium States, developing countries and Africa.

Pakistan, as a leading troop-contributing country for United Nations peacekeeping, is playing its due role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Our peacekeepers have laid down their lives in missions that were operationally demanding and geographically difficult. The unique status of the United Nations brings acceptance to its peacekeeping activities, and the success of peacekeeping operations, in turn, brings credibility to the world body. For those suffering in a conflict zone, the sight of a blue helmet provides a beacon of hope, which has illuminated the lives of millions by bringing peace and alleviating their pains and sorrows.

Our commitment to the promotion of peace, security and stability, the development of friendly relations with other nations, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and the promotion of economic and social development is unwavering. It is that firm conviction that has enabled our democratic Government to remain steadfast in its resolve to fight terrorism and extremism, even as we have to deal with the massive destruction caused by catastrophic floods. Our national consensus and resolve to fight extremism and terrorism remains unshaken.

The world recognizes and applauds the important successes achieved by our security forces against terrorists. Those successes have come at a heavy cost. More than 20,000 innocent civilians have fallen victim to terrorism, and more than 2,500 personnel of the security forces have offered the ultimate sacrifice. Our material losses are nearly $50 billion. The Pakistani nation will persist in its efforts to eliminate terrorism.

The issue has both regional and global dimensions. It is imperative that all countries do more to combat that menace. It is also essential to address the root causes of terrorism, which are often found in poverty, deprivation, injustices and oppression. Terrorists recognize no borders; they have no religion and no creed. It is therefore absurd to malign a whole people or a region or any religion on that account. We cannot accept the stereotyping of Muslims as terrorists. Islam is a religion of peace, compassion and brotherhood. Terrorism is a complete antithesis to Islam's humanistic outlook and noble values.

Pakistan supports the just cause of the Palestinian people for restitution of their inalienable national rights, including their independent Palestinian State with Al Quds Al Sharif as its capital.

The brazen use of force against the humanitarian freedom flotilla on 31 May 2010, which resulted in the killing of humanitarian workers, was a flagrant violation of international law and norms. We look forward to a prompt, impartial and transparent inquiry of the incident by the Secretary-General's Panel of Inquiry.

The dispute over Jammu and Kashmir is one of the oldest on the agenda of the United Nations. It is about the exercise of the right to self-determination by the Kashmiri people through a free, fair and impartial plebiscite under United Nations auspices.

Pakistan views the prevailing situation in Indian-occupied Kashmir with grave concern. Over the past two months, more than 100 Kashmiris have been killed by Indian security forces in Kashmir. We strongly condemn that brutality. The human rights of the Kashmiri people must be respected and their voices heard to create an enabling environment for a peaceful solution to the long-standing Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Pakistan reaffirms its complete solidarity with

the Kashmiri people and urges the international community to persuade India to end its repression in Kashmir.

Pakistan is willing to engage India in a comprehensive dialogue to normalize relations between the two countries by finding amicable solutions to all outstanding issues, including the core dispute of Jammu and Kashmir. A peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute, in accordance with United Nations resolutions and taking into account the aspirations of the Kashmiri people, would create an atmosphere conducive to durable peace and stability in the South Asian region.

In the spirit of global solidarity and good-neighbourly relations, Pakistan has hosted the largest concentration of refugees anywhere in the world for the past 30 years. We continue to host our Afghan brothers as a moral and humanitarian duty. No country has suffered more than Pakistan from the direct and indirect consequences of decades of conflict in Afghanistan. We thus have an abiding stake in peace and stability in Afghanistan. Our commitment to that objective remains firm. The time has come to transform Afghanistan from the centre stage of proxy wars, interference and confrontation into a hub for international cooperation and development.

Pakistan believes that the restoration of societal equilibrium in Afghanistan is an Afghan responsibility and cannot be imposed externally. We support all efforts for national reconciliation that are Afghan-owned and Afghan-led. We congratulate the Government of Afghanistan on holding successful parliamentary elections. They will strengthen President Karzai's initiation of national reconciliation and reintegration.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are important pillars of the international peace and security architecture. We remain committed to both objectives and believe that they should be pursued in an equitable and non discriminatory manner. The asymmetric build-up of conventional weapons and the espousal of aggressive doctrines have a negative impact on regional security.

The pursuit of discriminatory policies and disregard for the security interests of States seriously erode globally the moral authority that must underlie equitable approaches to promoting the goals of nuclear disarmament and non proliferation. We have consistently pursued a policy of conventional and nuclear restraint, along with conflict resolution in South Asia. We reaffirm our proposal for a strategic restraint regime as an important way to promote the cause of peace, stability and security in our region.

Pakistan, with the fifth largest population in the world and only 0.4 per cent of the world's total greenhouse-gas emissions, is one hundred and thirty-fifth on the global list of greenhouse-gas emitters. Despite such a low contribution, climate change is causing irrevocable damage to Pakistan, with tremendous social, environmental and economic impacts. While the world continues to discuss climate change and its scientific basis and to seek a fair and equitable outcome of the ongoing negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), climate change has already become a reality for 170 million Pakistanis.

The present situation in Pakistan reconfirms our extreme vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change. It also complicates the post-flood reconstruction and rehabilitation scenario in Pakistan. It is in Pakistan's interests to work vigorously and creatively for an early and successful conclusion to the ongoing climate-change negotiations under UNFCCC auspices. Any lasting solution will have to respect the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and the respective capabilities of countries.

With an active and empowered Parliament, a vigilant and well-informed civil society, free media and an independent judiciary, Pakistan's democratic Government is putting in place mechanisms to ensure good and accountable governance at all levels in the country. The democratic Government, inspired by the vision of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, attaches special attention to the promotion and protection of the human rights of all segments of society, particularly women, children and minorities. In May, Pakistan ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Pakistan is now a State party to all 27 human rights conventions.

We welcome the creation of the new composite gender entity, UN Women. We hope it will lead the efforts to promote rights, empowerment and equality for women throughout the world.

Pursuing peace and forging close regional economic partnerships is an important pillar of our strategy to pursue economic growth and development in Pakistan. We are working through both the Economic Cooperation Organization and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation to further deepen regional collaboration and expand people-to-people contacts, including through inter-parliamentary cooperation.

Our strategy and actions at the national level stem from a firm belief that the primary responsibility and central action in our pursuit for economic growth and development is vested in our nation. Despite a challenging economic and security environment, we are pursuing an aggressive reform programme. That agenda focuses on pro poor growth, boosting rural economy and agriculture, affirmative action for women and minorities and expansion of social safety nets. We are conscious that that requires enhanced fiscal space, for which we have introduced economic and tax reforms in close collaboration with international development partners.

The President returned to the Chair.

We have to work together to make this world a safe and secure place for our children. We have to make strenuous endeavours to achieve the ideals of the United Nations Charter. We have to make this world a prosperous place free from hunger, want and poverty. We owe all this to our future generations. We cannot afford to fail in this endeavour.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Dimitris Droutsas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic.

Mr. Droutsas (Greece): I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of Libya, for his tireless efforts in taking forward the Assembly's work and to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President at the sixty-fifth session.

I would also like at this point to fully align my country's positions with those expressed in the statement of the European Union (EU). It is my firm belief that the General Assembly would greatly benefit from arrangements that would allow EU representatives to fulfil their responsibilities in an effective manner at formal meetings.

We can all agree that the United Nations is the only global entity that commands universal legitimacy and is the Organization to which we should all look, and actively support, in order to provide collective and therefore optimal solutions to the ever-growing array of multifaceted issues confronting us. It is a fact that meeting the needs of our peoples increasingly transcends the abilities of individual nation-States. That is where the role of the United Nations comes to the fore, and it is why our discussions on reforming and revitalizing the Organization are of paramount importance.

Climate change is the world's greatest environmental challenge. We all know that it will increasingly affect all aspects of our lives, including peace and security. We now need to focus all efforts in order to secure a successful outcome of the upcoming summit in Cancún.

The Greek Government is proposing a new Mediterranean Climate Change Initiative, in close collaboration with Mediterranean countries that are strongly committed to climate and energy security. A formal launch of the Initiative is planned on 22 October in Athens, ahead of the Cancún summit. In the same vein, the central theme of our Chairmanship-in-Office of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation is "the Black Sea turns green".

The recent global economic and financial crisis has left few countries unaffected. Greece was no exception, despite the tough and radical reform agenda we are implementing that is setting the country steadily back on its feet. Efforts for a more efficient and concrete global financial regulatory framework are necessary. In that regard, I welcome the results of the High-level Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, and I commend the Secretary-General for his timely initiative.

Greece continues to support all efforts for an effective and efficient Human Rights Council with enhanced status, mandate, structures and membership. Greece will actively defend the relevance of the Human Rights Council through its candidacy for the years 2012 to 2015.

Promoting effective interaction and coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations must be one of our key priorities. We consider the upcoming 2010 summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) a major

milestone in the European security dialogue — the well-known Corfu Process, launched by the Greek OSCE Chairmanship in 2009.

Greece has made a commitment especially to our region and its people. A key factor for bringing stability and development to our region is good-neighbourliness, a fundamental principle that together with the other principles set out in the Charter of the United Nations constitutes the cornerstone of contemporary international legal order.

The Balkans —our immediate neighbourhood — is still a sensitive area in terms of stability. The dust from the dissolution of Yugoslavia has not yet settled. Greece's vision for the Balkans is of a region in which democracy finally becomes the norm, where citizens' aspirations can finally be realized through peaceful and democratic practices, where the rights of minorities are respected, and where Governments are accountable, economies are transparent and politics allow for the fullest participation of all elements of society.

In order to breathe new life into the prospect of the Balkans' integration into the European Union, Greece has put forward a new initiative known as Agenda 2014. There are still open wounds in our region — Kosovo being the most pressing — and we must ensure that this time the European Union will be present with a strong voice. The European prospect for our entire region can boost the political process that is about to begin on Kosovo. At the same time, we need to keep an open and clear path for Serbia to begin accession negotiations with the European Union.

Another open issue in the Balkans revolves around the name of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. That is not a bilateral, pedantic dispute about historic symbols, as some may try to portray it, but a regional question with deep historical roots related to good-neighbourliness. A compromise on the name issue is needed. Greece has already done its part. A fair and lasting solution can be based only on a name with a geographic qualifier to be used for all purposes, erga omnes. Let me explain why.

Macedonia is a large geographic region, most of which lies in Greece. A small part is in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and a smaller part in Bulgaria. The part cannot represent the whole, and the exclusive claims of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the name "Macedonia" cannot be allowed to fuel nationalism. Any solution must be universally implemented, because otherwise today's situation will simply be perpetuated. We have intensified our efforts to reach a settlement in the context of the established United Nations negotiating process, led by Mr. Nimetz.

I chose the General Assembly, which is the natural forum for solving international disputes, to declare once again Greece's readiness to reach a solution, even tomorrow, and to call upon Prime Minister Gruevski to display leadership and become our partner for progress, progress that will result in a bright and prosperous future for our neighbours in the European Union — a future we wish to see become a reality soon. Greece is extending a hand of friendship and cooperation. The time has come for our neighbours to take that hand.

The Arab-Israeli conflict is again at a turning point. The resumption of direct talks was a significant achievement, but only the beginning. Now our number one priority is to sustain that dialogue and for it to bear fruit. Both sides have an obligation to show respect for that fragile diplomatic process. Actions that threaten its very existence, like Israeli settlement construction, must be avoided in order to prevent the negotiations from becoming one more exercise in futility.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General and all those who labour with him for a just solution in Cyprus, a solution based on United Nations resolutions for a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with one international personality, one citizenship and one sovereignty, a solution in full conformity with the acquis communautaire.

Cyprus is a tragic example of where our shared sense of justice — our shared code of values — has gone astray. Cyprus is the victim of military invasion and remains occupied by foreign troops. That is the truth; that is reality, and it must end. We need to move beyond that situation. It will take courage from everyone involved. It is a matter of political will, resolution and determination, such as that displayed by President Christofias.

I extend my appeal to the Turkish Cypriots. We want you near us, in our wider European family. The participation of a reunited Cyprus in the European Union means that every Cypriot enjoys safety, equality under the law, protection of their human rights, appropriate representation and security under a European roof. Let me be clear: in the modern

European environment, relics of the past, such as guarantor Powers, seem and sound anachronistic and completely out of touch.

Turkey can prove its commitment to a lasting solution to the Cyprus issue by withdrawing its occupation forces from the island, thus boosting both the negotiation process and its own European perspective.

Greek-Turkish relations are an important parameter for the stability of the region. Burdened by a heavy historical past as we are, it is not an easy task to change course and turn a long-standing rivalry into good-neighbourliness, free from the threat of the use of force or unfounded territorial claims. Respect for international law is the sole basis for a healthy and peaceful relationship between our two countries.

We have opened a dialogue, one that is honest, and although we may and do differ on many issues, such as how we see Cyprus and how we approach our bilateral relations, this open approach can only lead to a progressive resolution of our problems. The Turkish leadership and the people of Turkey know we are honest in what we say and in our desire for a new and peaceful relationship. I strongly believe our mutual interests can outweigh our political differences. We can and must resolve these differences through peaceful means, and a possible way to go is through the International Court of Justice.

I do not want to give the false impression that all our problems have suddenly been resolved. It is most distressing that a variety of statements and acts still undermine this very genuine and difficult effort. The long-standing threat of war, the casus belli against my country, is unacceptable and has no place in our European and global family of values and principles.

There are those who certainly may wish that our efforts fail, but it is our historical duty to overcome those difficulties and maintain the momentum in response to our peoples' mandate and their desire for peace.

We look forward to the day when Belgrade and Pristina will be an easy bus ride away, when Jerusalem and Damascus, Athens and Ankara and, of course, the two parts of divided Nicosia will no longer be separated by fear and suspicion, but will be joined in peace. Those were the words used and the vision expressed by George Papandreou, today's Prime Minister of Greece, in his very first address to the General Assembly as Greek Foreign Minister in 1999 (see *A/54/PV.9*). Allow me repeat those words and vision in my first address to this body in the same capacity. This is a wish and vision that, I think, we all share.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Arvin Boolell, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade of the Republic of Mauritius.

Mr. Boolell (Mauritius): I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, and I thank your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Ali Treki, for his excellent stewardship of the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I seize this opportunity to convey to you the warm greetings of the Honourable Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of Mauritius.

We are meeting this year against the backdrop of the triple blow of food, fuel and financial crises, which have significantly slowed the social and economic progress of many, particularly developing, countries. Although we are now witnessing signs of gradual recovery, we are nonetheless aware of the fact that the world is still mired in the consequences of the recession.

These crises have exposed the deficiencies of the international financial and governance structure and made us realize that the pre crisis status quo has to be challenged, if we are to ensure a better future for our people. While we acknowledge the pre eminent role that the Group of 20 is playing in addressing the financial and economic crisis, the widening and acceleration of global integration and interconnectedness dictate the necessity of democratizing the international economic and financial decision-making processes in order to ensure that the future development of our global economy is balanced and equitable.

It was therefore reassuring to hear the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Mr. Dominique Strauss-Kahn, stating last Monday,

> "To regain momentum, we need a sense of shared responsibility among the various actors — the developing countries *themselves, the advanced*

economies and, in part, the international financial institutions." (*A/65/PV.3*)

The statistics are eloquent regarding the negative impact of the multitude of crises on the progress achieved on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As global economic output has declined, the ranks of the poor have swelled with the newly poor.

A week ago, from this very rostrum, an impressive number of world leaders reaffirmed their commitments to the Millennium Development Goals. In our drive to enable the less fortunate to lead a dignified life, it is imperative that we have closer cooperation and collaboration between Government, civil society and the private sector, supplemented by innovative thinking, cutting-edge knowledge and path-breaking initiatives.

Success in achieving the Millennium Development Goals is inextricably linked to the broader agenda of climate change. The effects of climate change and global warming threaten the very implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. While climate change is affecting all countries, it is abundantly clear that the small islands and low-lying and coastal States are the most affected by its consequences.

We therefore urge that the small island developing States be given simplified access to financing from the $30 billion of fast-start funding pledged in the Copenhagen Accord and similar access to the longer-term funds proposed for the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund. That adaptation funding should be in the form of grants and not loans.

We hope that the forthcoming Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Cancún later this year, will build on the 2009 Copenhagen Accord to ultimately arrive at a legally binding agreement on limits to greenhouse gas emissions based on the principle of common but differentiated capabilities and responsibilities and the establishment of mitigation and adaptation funds. Let us therefore join our efforts and not miss the opportunity, because a world that is climate-smart is within reach, if we act now, act together and act differently.

In its effort to contribute towards the global momentum to attain a low-carbon future, Mauritius is implementing the Maurice Ile Durable project, which aims at protecting the environment and minimizing dependence on fossil fuels through increased utilization of renewable energy and a more efficient use of energy in general.

The High-level Review Meeting on the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States re emphasized the fact that, owing to their inherent specificity, small island developing States should be recognized as a distinct category of countries and should be granted special treatment, particularly in accessing official development assistance and concessionary funding. The present gross domestic product criterion applied in graduating least developed countries to middle-income status is most unfair to small island developing States, since it does not take into account the unique vulnerabilities of those States.

The time has come for a shift in how we think of development. We need to articulate strongly a new development paradigm, one where developing countries are part and parcel of the solution to create a more vibrant world economy in this truly multipolar world.

We therefore look forward to the successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round at the earliest possible date. It is also crucial to close the gaps in the provision of Aid for Trade so as to support the building of supply capacity, which lies at the core of development.

At the subregional level, Mauritius, in its capacity as the new chair of the Indian Ocean Commission, will continue to lay greater emphasis on the creation of an economic and commercial space, the implementation of a regional strategy on fisheries and aquaculture, the promotion of tourism in our region in traditional and emerging markets, and the development of a comprehensive regional anti-piracy programme.

A fundamental precondition for socio economic development can be found in a process of social inclusiveness, with human rights at its core. As a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council, Mauritius is firmly committed to the safeguarding and protection of human rights, at both the national and the international levels. In this regard, we unreservedly *condemn* the serious human rights violations committed by warring factions in conflict zones, where

vulnerable members of the society, particularly women and children, are being targeted. At the national level, a truth and reconciliation commission has started the challenging task of compiling a report on slavery and indentured labour in Mauritius during the colonial period.

Mauritius continues to be preoccupied with the fate of pro democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, whose heroic and unbreakable determination and steadfastness to free her people from years of subjugation compel all of us who are strong advocates of democratic values to stand and speak up. Depriving Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi of the right to stand as a candidate in the forthcoming general elections scheduled in November this year is considered by my delegation as the deprivation of the basic rights of the people of Myanmar to freely choose the leaders to whom they wish to entrust the destiny of their country.

Democracy and the rule of law are essential elements for the development, stability, security and prosperity of any country. The world has made significant strides in this respect. Nonetheless, it is regrettable that conflicts in certain parts of the world continue to undermine progress. The imperatives of a globalizing world require the international community to remain seized of these issues and not to shirk its responsibilities.

In the Indian Ocean region, Mauritius is particularly concerned with the current political impasse prevailing in our neighbouring sisterly country — Madagascar. We are actively engaged in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU) and the Indian Ocean Commission, working to assist Madagascar to find a peaceful solution to the political crisis.

In this regard, we wish to state that we are supportive of the initiative led by the *Coordination National des Organisations de la Société Civile* to organize an inter Malagasy dialogue in order to find a solution designed by all Malagasies to the crisis in Madagascar. And we sincerely hope that the dialogue will be credible, transparent and include all sections of Malagasy society in the search for durable peace in the interest of both the country and the region. Mauritius has offered its assistance in setting up an SADC liaison office in Madagascar in order to provide support in moving the Malagasy-Malagasy dialogue.

Two decades of civil unrest have inflicted untold miseries and difficulties on the Somali people and rendered governance of the country almost impossible. We commend the Intergovernmental Authority on Development for its efforts to promote peace and security in Somalia through the Transitional Federal Government. We believe that the people of Somalia deserve greater commitment from the international community towards restoring law and order inside the country and also towards putting an end to the piracy problem off the coast of Somalia.

In order to promote a more proactive engagement of the countries of the region in the fight against piracy, Mauritius will host the Second Regional Ministerial Conference on Piracy on 6 and 7 October, in collaboration with the European Union, the Indian Ocean Commission and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa. Mauritius is also envisaging the possibility of trying piracy suspects caught in the Indian Ocean in its courts, if the logistical, infrastructural and financial support of the international community is adequate.

The current process for talks between Israelis and Palestinians has given renewed hope for lasting peace through the creation of an independent sovereign Palestinian State existing side by side with the State of Israel within secured and recognized borders. Mauritius has always supported the legitimate and inalienable right of the Palestinian people to live in peace and security in an independent Palestinian State. We therefore commend President Barack Obama for his initiatives and leadership in enabling the direct talks between President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Global governance in the maintenance of international peace and security will remain incomplete until we achieve a comprehensive reform of the United Nations Security Council — a reformed Security Council that meets and responds to the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century. In this respect, Mauritius fully supports the Common African Position, as enshrined in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. We reiterate our support for India, the largest democracy, obtaining a permanent seat in a reformed Security Council. We also support the rightful aspiration of Latin America and the Caribbean for a permanent seat in the Council.

We have in no uncertain terms drawn the attention of this body every year to the fact that Mauritius has sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia. The Chagos Archipelago was illegally excised by the United Kingdom from the territory of Mauritius prior to our independence. This dismemberment was done in blatant violation of General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960 and 2066 (XX) of 16 December 1965. We have raised the issue of the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Archipelago with successive British Governments and initially pursued the matter as a friendly dispute. In view of the lack of progress, we suggested that the issue be addressed in bilateral talks. Although the process of bilateral talks was initiated in January 2009, the issue of our sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago has yet to be addressed.

We are deeply concerned that the British Government decided on 1 April 2010 to unilaterally declare a marine protected area around the Chagos Archipelago — our territory — allegedly to protect the marine environment. The unilateral establishment of this marine protected area infringes the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Archipelago and constitutes a serious impediment to the eventual resettlement there of its former inhabitants and other Mauritians, as any economic activity in the protected zone would be precluded. The Government of Mauritius has decided not to recognize the existence of the so called marine protected area.

The illegal excision of the Chagos Archipelago from the territory of Mauritius has indeed a tragic human dimension. All the inhabitants of the Archipelago were at that time forced by the British authorities to abruptly leave their homes there, in total disregard for their human rights. Most of them were moved to the main island of Mauritius. The Government of Mauritius is sensitive to and fully supportive of the plight of the displaced inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago and to their desire to resettle in their birthplace there.

Mauritius greatly appreciates the unflinching and unanimous support it has consistently received from the African Union and the Non-Aligned Movement for the assertion of its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago. The last AU Summit held in Kampala last July and the last Non-Aligned Movement Summit held in July 2008 in Sharm el-Sheikh both reaffirmed that the Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, forms an integral part of the territory of the Republic of Mauritius. They also called upon the United Kingdom to expeditiously put an end to its unlawful occupation of the Chagos Archipelago with a view to enabling Mauritius to effectively exercise its sovereignty over it.

We urge the United Kingdom once again to take the necessary steps for the unconditional return of the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, to Mauritius without further delay. In our annual statement, we also reaffirmed the sovereignty of Mauritius over Tromelin Island. The Governments of Mauritius and France reached an agreement earlier this year on the co management of the island and its maritime zones without prejudice to the sovereignty of Mauritius over Tromelin. This is considered to be a first and positive step towards the resolution of the sovereignty issue.

(*spoke in French*)

The Republic of Mauritius is a crucible of civilizations and cultures. We are proud to be a haven of peace, where people of various backgrounds and traditions live together in harmony. The people of Mauritius are inspired by the philosophy of multiculturalism and consider their diversity to be a rich human resource. Based on the vision expressed in our motto, "Unity, equality and modernity", we have committed to place humanity at the centre of all development in our pluralistic society — a society based on diversity, respect for cultural individuality, non-discrimination and sharing common values.

The United Nations is the pre-eminent forum for intercultural dialogue. My country will fully play its part in the combined global effort for all human beings to enjoy the consideration and respect that are their birthright.

(*spoke in English*)

Finally, I should like to reaffirm Mauritius' unwavering faith in the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace, security and development.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Mr. Mladenov (Bulgaria): Every year we come together in this great Hall of the United Nations, to

reaffirm our commitment to multilateralism. Nations big and small, rich and poor, gather from the four corners of the world here at the United Nations, driven by the conviction that, if we work together, we will find solutions to the challenges of today and tomorrow. As these challenges grow and become more interconnected, so grows our conviction that only through cooperation and dialogue can we resolve them. This is the fundamental belief with which, for 55 years, the Bulgarian delegation, like many others, has come to the United Nations.

Like every day, today will be unique, because our actions on this day will forge our tomorrows. We can spend our time dwelling on the past, or we can invest our time in the future that we will all face together. Today, our world faces a complicated web of challenges, but also of opportunities. We face the challenge of addressing global climate change by creating opportunities for sustainable development. We face the challenge of reducing the conflicts and opportunities that come from providing sufficient clean water to millions of people. We face the challenge of developing an ethical market economy and the countless opportunities that will emerge from reducing the poverty gap. We face the challenge of reducing ethnic conflicts, terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the opportunities that come from good governance, democracy and freedom. We may also, perhaps, address the most paramount challenge of our time: to prove wrong all those who believe that the world is heading towards an irreversible clash of civilizations — because none of the global challenges that we face today can be understood, tackled or addressed without respect for different opinions, without dialogue between faiths and without adherence to the global values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

(*spoke in French*)

On behalf of the Government of Bulgaria, I congratulate Mr. Deiss on the assumption of the presidency of this Assembly at this sixty-fifth session. Our appreciation also goes to Mr. Ali Treki for his leadership during the previous session, and to Mr. Ban Ki-moon for his efforts to strengthen and promote the United Nations.

(*spoke in English*)

Let me begin by welcoming the results of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Regardless of the fact that efforts to achieve the MDGs have not stayed on course, their attainment is still within our reach. Reaffirming the principle of solidarity between those who have and those who need is of the essence. My country faces challenges imposed by the global economic and financial crisis. We have, however, committed ourselves to develop our own donor capacity, and so we shall. We shall do so, because Bulgaria — like a number of countries that have joined the European Union (EU) since the fall of the Berlin Wall — understands that the solidarity that was extended to us now needs to be extended by us to those less fortunate. To be effective, we shall work in close coordination with our partners, avoid duplication and aim at addressing the root causes — not the symptoms — of today's problems. Otherwise, we will not be building a better tomorrow. In this effort the role of the United Nations will always remain vitally important, particularly in helping to mitigate the development impact of the crisis on the less developed and most vulnerable countries.

As dangerous as the current global crisis is, it also gives us a chance to green our economies, particularly by putting them on a sustainable and low-carbon path. This year, 2010, has been proclaimed as the International Year of Biodiversity. Economic growth and the preservation of the environment must go hand-in-hand across the globe. Today there can be no excuses — neither in developed countries, nor in developing countries — because any excuse that we find today will cost us more tomorrow. That is why Bulgaria believes that the United Nations must be given the tools to respond adequately to the increasing challenges of environmental protection.

Today, much more so than in the past, we see increased demand and pressure on international humanitarian efforts. The devastating earthquake in Haiti last year killed hundreds of thousands and left a staggering 20 per cent of the population homeless. Haiti's call was, however, heeded throughout the globe. Allow me to praise the work of the United Nations and its agencies in responding quickly, but also pay tribute to all of the countries, non governmental organizations and individuals who came quickly to Haiti's assistance. The Bulgarian Government and people were quick to respond by providing financial and in kind assistance, including educational opportunities to young Haitians whose universities had been destroyed.

This year we have to help in the struggle of the 20 million people in Pakistan who have been affected by the terrible floods that have wrecked lives, ruined crops and destroyed economic opportunities. The Secretary-General and the United Nations were swift to react and deserve praise for their efforts, as does the rapid reaction of the European Union, the United States, India and other partners around the world. Allow me to use this forum to call on all to strengthen their efforts in assisting the people of Pakistan. However, I also call on Governments across the globe to help in removing barriers, so as to assist the Pakistani economy in its recovery. Helping today and creating opportunities tomorrow — that should be our goal in a country that is vital to global stability and security. In this, let me assure you that Bulgaria will also shoulder its share of the needed solidarity. Already the Government and the Bulgarian Red Cross have launched a nation-wide campaign to raise funds and contribute to the rebuilding efforts in Pakistan.

No matter how successful we are in our development and humanitarian efforts, the benefits cannot fully be borne in an insecure and unstable environment. Allow me to briefly look closer to home — the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean. The European Union was created to make war impossible in a continent that has seen at least a century of conflicts. In Europe, however, we have unfinished business. Europe will not be whole and complete until our neighbours in the Balkans join our Union. It falls on us — those who joined the European Union late, not by their own choice, but because of the ideological divisions of the cold war — to say it loud and clear: to make war impossible in the Balkans we must see all countries that have emerged from the former Yugoslavia become part of the European Union. This is our historic mission. It is our destiny.

Bulgaria, which has struggled with its own transition and accession to the European Union, knows the benefits and the challenges best. That is why today I am proud to stand here and commend the General Assembly for unanimously adopting resolution 64/298, approving the joint EU Serbia compromise text on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the declaration of independence by Kosovo. Bulgaria supported it wholeheartedly, because we firmly believe that dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina is key, both to the stability of the region and to the European perspective of our neighbours. It will be a difficult process, charged with emotion and scarred by history, but it will be a process that can today lay the foundations of a better tomorrow for all. It is a process that the Bulgarian Government is not just willing, but eager to support, and will lend all necessary assistance to the efforts of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina the international community faces many challenges, but the struggle between the fears of yesterday and the opportunities of tomorrow can be resolved today by the people of Bosnia themselves. Bulgaria will, more actively than ever, contribute to this reconciliation, because we believe that our role in South-Eastern Europe and beyond is to bring people together, not divide them; to seek solutions, not to watch from the sidelines.

We must constantly reaffirm our commitment to bring our neighbours in the Western Balkans into the European Union when they meet the criteria for membership. But our neighbours also must reaffirm their own commitment to undertaking often very difficult reforms and strengthening regional cooperation and good-neighbourly relations.

There are cynics who say that the world cannot live together, that for peace to exist we must build walls of separation between peoples, religions and ethnic communities; cynics who say that civilizations must clash. I come from a country that is in a turbulent part of the world, yet we have managed to prove that people of different religions — Christians, Muslims and Jews, and of different ethnicities — Bulgarians, Turks and Armenians, can live together.

Bulgaria has seen stellar moments in its history, for example, when civil society rose during the Second World War and refused to allow its Jewish population to be sent to concentration camps, or when it integrated its Turkish population after the end of communism. But, it has also seen its dark moments — when it failed to save the Jewish populations of occupied Northern Greece and Vardar Macedonia, or when the Communist regime expelled a large part of our Muslim citizens to Turkey. Our history has taught us to be able to distinguish between good and bad. Our history proves that the cynics are wrong, that people can live together in peace.

That is why Bulgaria cannot remain uninterested in the Middle East. We believe that, just as the Jewish

people have a homeland in the State of Israel, so the Palestinian people have the right to an independent State of Palestine that lives in peace with its neighbours. During the past months we have all witnessed the efforts of the United States Administration to restart the direct negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians. Many of us have made passionate speeches on the need and urgency of peace. Today, the Palestinian and Israeli leaders face the historic challenge of looking to tomorrow and not being tied down by yesterday. The Middle East cannot afford a failed peace process. The world cannot afford a peace process that does not have a comprehensive end goal in sight.

Today we must all recognize that hard decisions are called for and lend our full support to President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu to help them walk the hard road to peace. Obstacles should be overcome and preconditions should be removed. If the leaders of Palestine believe that settlement policy is an obstacle to peace, the leaders of Israel must refrain from such activities in order to give peace a chance. If the leaders of Israel believe that no preconditions to a final settlement should be put in place, then the Palestinian leaders must refrain from such actions in order to give peace a chance.

The choice today is not between peace negotiations and economic development, because peace and prosperity go hand in hand. No one should feel singled out or left behind, because the enemies of peace are many — those who feel that walls are safer than bridges and those who feel that religions cannot coexist. You can take away a man's life, but you ultimately cannot take away his faith or dignity.

This is why I call on all Members of the United Nations to stand firmly behind the efforts of the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to achieve peace. In doing this, we must recognize the legitimate concerns of both sides — Israel's security and the viability of a Palestinian State.

In this effort we should not forget the 1.5 million people who live in Gaza — Palestinians who have the right to a better life, just like the children of Sderot have the right to go to school without the threat of rockets. We have an obligation to help open up access to Gaza without compromising the security of Israel. History has proven that isolation and deprivation breed radicalism, and it is in the interest of peace that more opportunities be created.

Today the world faces other grave security challenges that will shape our tomorrow. We must reconfirm our commitment to halting the spread of nuclear weapons. This mission is above politics, diplomacy, national ambitions and personal egos. It is our universal obligation and a joint commitment that we undertook 40 years ago. Bulgaria believes that every nation must put a strengthened Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) at the centre of its national diplomacy. The uncovering of clandestine nuclear networks has brought the spectre of non State actors equipped with weapons of mass destruction closer. We must not allow this to happen. All nations must recognize that the nuclear non proliferation regime is undermined if violators are allowed to act with impunity. We consider all States parties, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to be bound by their NPT obligations.

Leaving the NPT cannot be without consequences. Justified concerns, however, remain also about the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran. We call on Iran to deploy the necessary confidence-building measures to provide for greater transparency on its nuclear activities. Bulgaria believes that it is important to find a diplomatic solution. The recent efforts by Turkey and Brazil illustrate that there is will in the international community for dialogue. Therefore, a swift return to the negotiation table and full compliance with United Nations Security Council resolutions, as well as International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) standards and safeguards is a must.

International terrorism is one of the most serious contemporary threats to global peace and security. It cannot be justified by any political, philosophical, ideological, racial or ethnic considerations, nor by any ideology. The end goal of terrorism is to hinder our efforts to guarantee human rights, basic freedoms and democracy. Within the framework of the European Union, Bulgaria has endorsed the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. I appeal for a prompt finalization of the negotiations to reach a comprehensive convention on counter-terrorism.

An old nefarious practice has re-emerged on the high seas — piracy. Bulgaria has been directly affected by the escalating activities and audacity of the pirates

in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia. The fight against piracy leaves much to be desired, however. We need a firm international legal framework for the trial, detention and imprisonment of persons suspected of having committed acts of piracy. We need coordinated actions on the high seas to protect our shipping. Perhaps most of all, we need to address the root causes of piracy — poverty, isolation and lack of opportunity.

In Afghanistan, we face a threat that demands the continued military and civilian commitment on the part of the international community, which hinges on two important factors. Firstly, the ability of the Afghan Government to pave the way for reconciliation, tackle corruption and deliver services to its people and the renewed commitment of the international community and regional neighbours to strengthen the Afghan National Security Forces, while maintaining the pressure on radicals and insurgents and limiting their scope of action.

In these tasks the coordinated efforts of all, but foremost of the United Nations, NATO and the European Union, are vital. I would like to strongly support the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura, in Afghanistan. Their efforts should be appreciated and fully supported by the international community. I want to also pay tribute to the brave men and women of all International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) contributing nations, including the roughly 600 Bulgarian troops, who risk their lives to bring security to the people of Afghanistan.

Bulgaria's commitment to the future of Afghanistan is unfaltering, because we understand that it is our joint obligation to bring security to that tortured country, whose people deserve to be able to enjoy the freedoms and opportunities that many of us have. Bulgaria has increased its input to ISAF, including through more training units, which will work to build the capacity of the Afghan security forces. We continue to support the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan, which, jointly with NATO's Training Mission, plays an important role. We support the Afghan Government's peace and reintegration programme, in which the key role should be played by the Afghan State. Our commitment to Afghanistan is based on our firm belief that, if we succeed today, we will all live safer tomorrow.

A comprehensive security system can rest only on a robust partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations. This is why Bulgaria believes that the partnership between the European Union and the United Nations is a strategic one. As the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, put it, "Our commitment to the multilateral system of global governance through the UN and other bodies is clear" and we work "with conviction and clarity on the major challenges that face us, be they climate change, poverty, conflict or terrorism".

The transformation of the EU into a legal subject of international relations after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon has to be adequately reflected in a resolution of the General Assembly regarding the representation of the EU at the United Nations.

In closing, let me briefly touch on the reform of the United Nations. Bulgaria is convinced that if we are to effectively tackle the challenges of tomorrow, we must continuously adapt and improve the United Nations system. Therefore it is imperative that we continue the course of reforms initiated by the 2005 World Summit.

We believe that the reform of the Security Council is part of a comprehensive agenda for change at the United Nations. Bulgaria declares itself in favour of an enlargement of the Security Council capable of generating the largest possible consensus. In that context, Bulgaria has endorsed the enlargement of the Council in its two categories — permanent and non permanent members.

I started by reiterating our firm commitment to multilateralism. The agenda of the United Nations is broad and diverse, and I have attempted, on behalf of the Government of Bulgaria, to briefly touch on just some of the issues that ought to be discussed in this forum.

Our commitment to multilateralism can be equalled only by our unfaltering belief that dialogue and diplomacy can achieve more than can confrontation and war. More than half a century ago, the United Nations came together and enshrined those principles as the cornerstones of international law. Since then, with varying degrees of success, we have attempted to live by them. It is time for us to realize that the global challenges of tomorrow can be tackled only by collective action today. Nothing is impossible,

but only if we work together, discuss, disagree and agree, but share a goal — a peaceful and prosperous world that is safe for all.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Osman Mohammed Saleh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Eritrea.

Mr. Saleh (Eritrea): Let me start by extending my sincere congratulations to you, Mr. President, and your country, Switzerland, for your election to preside over the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. I am confident that with your extensive experience and diplomatic skill, you will lead this session to a successful conclusion. I pledge the support of the Eritrean delegation in your noble efforts for the common good. I wish also to commend your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, for his excellent leadership. He indeed served us well. I would also like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki moon for his leadership and his report on the work of our United Nations at the outset of this general debate (see A/65/PV.11).

We meet again, at this sixty-fifth session of the Assembly, to expound on the state of our individual countries and to reflect on regional, continental and global affairs. We come to this gathering year after year to share our thoughts and explain our positions on some issues of interest. Yet we realize that the outcome of our deliberations and resolutions falls far short of our own expectations, let alone the aspirations of humanity. We agree that the institutions and procedures of this Organization have long outlived their time, and yet we remain paralysed in our efforts to transform the United Nations.

While the prospects for a rapid reform of the United Nations system appear to be dim, we cannot and will not give up. We have to continue to speak out and work tirelessly for a United Nations that is fit for the twenty-first century and for a more just and equitable world. At the same time, we have to focus on our own nations and regions to ensure a peaceful and stable environment and a dignified life for our peoples. It is that perspective that informs Eritrea's policies at the national, regional and international levels.

Internationally, Eritrea seeks, through robust and constructive engagement, to make its modest contribution to global peace, security, justice and equity and to the protection and enhancement of the environment in the face of changes that threaten the very survival of humanity.

Regionally, Eritrea's efforts are directed at securing peace, stability, development and cooperation in the wider Horn of Africa and the Red Sea regions. We endeavour to contribute to transforming our dangerous neighbourhood, a neighbourhood mired in numerous conflicts, into a cooperative and peaceful region. In that connection, I wish to touch upon some of Eritrea's immediate concerns.

In regard to the Sudan, Eritrea is working closely with the Sudanese parties and with regional and international actors as the country enters a critical period in its history. Eritrea believes that the international community as a whole needs to wholeheartedly support the parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement as they approach the momentous referendum date in January 2011, and beyond. Irrespective of the outcome of the referendum, relations of trust and cooperation between the parties are crucial for peace and stability, not only in the north and south, but throughout the region. For all those reasons, we ought to encourage the parties to reach agreement on the post referendum issues and relations as soon as is feasible. There is also a need to simultaneously help the protagonists in the Darfur conflict to finally reach an agreement within the context of the Doha talks that are set to resume in the next few days.

On Somalia, it is Eritrea's considered view, borne out by the bitter experience and spiralling violence of the past two decades, that there can be no military solution to the problem in Somalia. While that conviction by now is widely shared in the international community, serious doubts continue to be raised as to whether the alternative — that is, a Somali-owned and Somali-driven, inclusive political process — is possible and practicable.

Eritrea does not by any means believe or suggest that that is easy or that it can lead to immediate results. It will undoubtedly be a complex and protracted process, but ultimately achievable. For, even in the past two turbulent decades, Somalis have more than once demonstrated that, given the right environment, they are capable of finding home-grown solutions to their problems. Eritrea therefore urges the United Nations and all those concerned with peace and stability in Somalia to earnestly engage all Somalis and to give the

political process the serious and sustained attention it deserves.

I turn next to the matter of Eritrea and Ethiopia. While the United Nations grapples with the Sudan and Somalia, it continues to ignore the grave consequences of Ethiopia's continued occupation of sovereign Eritrean territory, eight years after the ruling of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission and three years after the Commission ended its work by depositing with the United Nations the demarcation of the boundary between the two countries.

Ethiopia's illegal occupation and the United Nations silence, which mean the continuation of the conflict, are exacting a heavy price on the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia and are complicating the regional situation. I wish to remind the United Nations that Eritrea awaits responsible and urgent action to end Ethiopia's violation of international law and its threat to regional peace and security.

Eritrea's constructive engagement on regional and international matters stems from its firm conviction that a conducive external environment is essential for nation-building. As Eritrea enters its twentieth year of independence, it remains focused on broad-based and people-centred political, economic, social and cultural development that will afford a life of dignity and prosperity to our people. After several years of consistent investments in health, education, agriculture and other essential infrastructure, we have created a solid basis for sustained economic growth. It is expected that trade and domestic and foreign investment will provide additional impetus for the growth of our economy. I wish to seize this opportunity to extend an invitation to all interested countries and their enterprises to become our partners in development.

The President (spoke in French): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Pastor Micha Ondo Bile, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and la Francophonie of Equatorial Guinea.

Mr. Micha Ondo Bile (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the great honour to speak at the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President and head of State of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, who is not able to be here to participate, as he would have liked, owing to numerous high matters of State.

In the name of the Government and the people of Equatorial Guinea, I would first like to address our most sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your unanimous and wise election as President of the General Assembly at this session. We wish you great success in leading its work and deliberations. I also extend our thanks to the other elected members of the Bureau. Most especially, we wish to express our admiration and respect to His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, outgoing President and eminent diplomat of Africa, who did outstanding work as President at the sixty-fourth session and who is responsible for our beginning this session with optimism.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea reaffirms its resolute commitment and attachment to the ideals, principles and objectives of the United Nations. In that context, I salute Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and reiterate to him the recognition of the Government and people of Equatorial Guinea of his wise administration at the head of this great Organization. In particular, we appreciate his vision and the timeliness with which he has identified the seven strategic themes of our current world, which merit the greatest attention from every State Member during this session.

Equatorial Guinea is taking part in the work of this session with a good deal of optimism with regard to an eventual and gradual solution of the problems today facing humankind in general, and the African continent in particular. Above all, that is because since the 1990s there have been several initiatives aimed at encouraging sustainable development. Those initiatives have been promoted through major world conferences and summits that have addressed such major subjects as population and sustainable development, food, the environment and financing for development. In the context of this 2010 session, we shall consider the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of those major summits and conferences, such as the Millennium Summit.

What can we see after more than 10 years since those summits, especially the Millennium Summit? As has been wisely pointed out in previous interventions in the Assembly, there is no point in doing things in the same way and expecting different results.

Unfortunately, both the report of the Secretary-General (A/65/1) and the interventions delivered in recent days by different delegations during the High-

level Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals indicate that rather than improving, the number of people who suffer from hunger has increased, the number of those living in poverty remains high and the environment has been degraded. The latter has led to serious climactic changes and the ensuing natural disasters, including constant flooding, earthquakes, hurricanes and so on, which have caused total destruction in several countries and seriously undermined people's ability to survive.

Were that not enough, there has also been an increase in acts of international terrorism, organized and cross-border crime and piracy on a continental level. There has also been a worsening in the acute economic crisis, which continues to affect all humankind. All those phenomena illustrate the need for greater awareness and coordination on the part of every country on the planet.

All of us must focus our efforts, energy and resources on promoting and maintaining peace and security in the world, fostering a healthy environment and actively working and cooperating to eradicate nuclear weapons and to forcefully combat terrorism and international organized crime. We should work side by side to shape a world where there is a sense of participation and equality among men and women; a world where Security Council reform allows for better representation, participation and decision-taking that reflect the will and interests of every region and country of the world — large, medium or small.

Previous interventions have underscored the importance that "every Member country of the United Nations be clearly involved here, at the heart of the United Nations, to respond to urgent matters of today's world". It was that call that, in 2007, inspired His Excellency the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea to propose to the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization — UNESCO — the creation of an international prize for scientific investigation in the field of life sciences. That $3 million contribution is destined for the international scientific community, and its purpose is to seek solutions and remedies to the major pandemics and diseases that afflict the world today in general and especially the African continent.

Despite the great need of the international scientific community, despite the potential to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable communities, particularly in Africa, despite having been duly approved by the States members of the UNESCO Executive Board, and despite the unanimous decision of the international jury for the prize designating three international scientists, most of them from developing countries, as winners, this prize is still being blocked simply for being the initiative of an African leader.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea cannot but denounce the manipulations and manoeuvres of the new UNESCO administration against the humanitarian initiative of the people of Equatorial Guinea. As a State member, we find it unprecedented and therefore disturbing that a decision made by the Executive Board of a United Nations agency is not carried out by its leadership. What is most disturbing is that clear manipulations and injustices of certain undeclared interests have become apparent even in the heart of the United Nations-related organizations, as is, unfortunately, the case with UNESCO, where we believed that all the member States had the same consideration and rights.

For all of those reasons, the people and Government of Equatorial Guinea agree that this is the appropriate occasion and place to once more express their deep concern regarding the irresponsible, openly unjust and racist attitude that some actors, masked as non governmental organizations, are orchestrating against the praiseworthy initiative and the humanitarian intentions that led to the creation of the UNESCO Obiang Nguema Mbasogo Prize to motivate and encourage the action of scientists around the world in research for the preservation of life.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea asks that the UNESCO Obiang Nguema Mbasogo International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences come to fruition without further delay, in accordance with decision 180 EX/57, which was adopted by consensus by all the States members of the UNESCO Executive Board in October 2008.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is an independent and sovereign State, governed by a democratic and pluralist political system that respects the basic rights of people without racial, ethnic, gender or religious discrimination. Those principles are contained in the fundamental law and in the laws that serve as the basis for our country's legal system, which guarantees and promotes the individual and collective freedoms of the citizens of Equatorial Guinea and

provides for punishment for offenders who could violate the rule of law. Indeed, the Constitution of Equatorial Guinea reserves an important and privileged place for human rights and basic freedoms, inasmuch as they are based on the United Nations Charter and their principles and goals are inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Therefore, our country has begun a reform of its judicial system and has already ratified several international agreements and treaties concerning the promotion and protection of human rights, which have come to be an integral part of our legal system. Likewise, in the last 10 years the Government has made significant progress in updating and adapting its legislative, legal and administrative instruments with regard to the promotion and protection of civil and political rights, as well as social, economic and cultural rights.

In addition to those enormous and ongoing efforts, the Government of Equatorial Guinea has taken several other relevant measures and provisions to strengthen the implementation of the laws in force in the country in order to promote human rights and the rule of law. A particular instance is the recent enactment of the new Organic Law of Judicial Power, which determines the overall organization of the judicial system and the operation of justice in Equatorial Guinea.

In recent years, the world's nations have witnessed an intensification and increase of violence in acts of terrorism, in particular starting with the tragedy that took place in this beautiful and historic North American city of New York on 11 September 2001. Such acts have meant that the fight against terrorism has become a one of the priorities of international and national policy of all countries.

In that disturbing context, the United Nations and international law have been defining a set of very strict obligations that States must comply with in order to ensure an effective fight against that global scourge, which affects all States equally, irrespective of nationality or borders. In particular, we must bear in mind resolution 1373 (2001), and other related resolutions of the Security Council, which represents an important milestone with regard to international standards in the fight against terrorism. Indeed, that resolution is a general standard and imposes upon States a set of obligations that include that of criminalizing specific conducts, such as the financing of terrorism or the recruitment of members of terrorist groups. Consequently, the implementation of international standards in the fight against terrorism and, in particular, its criminal classification, is not merely a decision of domestic criminal policy, but rather a matter of compliance with obligations imposed by international law in general.

Our country has been a victim of terrorist attacks on several occasions in the past five years, and as a result the Government of Equatorial Guinea has put the fight against terrorism among the priorities of its Action Plan for national development, while at the same time condemning in the most vigorous terms all acts of terrorism, regardless of their motivation or origin, since those acts constitute one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

Equatorial Guinea remains loyal to its commitments and is deeply convinced of the need to continue the efforts it has been deploying in connection with the Millennium Declaration and in harmony with the purposes and principles of the United Nations aimed at overcoming the many challenges of development.

However, the current situation requires a closer and more dynamic, effective, sincere and coordinated cooperation, without any conditions, as well as the coordinated and united support of all of the political forces of developed, developing and least developed countries, with a view to promoting shared prosperity and a better future for all the world's countries.

I would like to conclude my statement on behalf of the Government of Equatorial Guinea by renewing our strong desire to change the current concept and management of international affairs — in which the often exclusive attitudes of certain States and regions can be discerned — through a firmer and more sincere commitment of the entire international community in favour of the current United Nations reform process which is designed to strengthen multilateralism. Only in that way can we establish solid and lasting bases for a world of peace and security — a prosperous world for today and a solid inheritance for future generations.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations A/65/PV.22

General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

22nd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 28 September 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Musa Abdussalam Kousa, Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamarihiya.

Mr. Kousa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am happy to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over the General Assembly during the current session. I wish you every success in managing our business.

It would be remiss of me not to express our appreciation to your predecessor for his efforts during his stewardship of the Assembly during the previous session.

I also wish to express the appreciation and thanks of my delegation to the Secretary-General for his efforts in the maintenance of international peace and security, which will not be achieved until the world gets rid of all weapons of mass destruction and implements the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) with respect to all, without distinction.

I remind the Assembly that my country has stressed the important need to amend the NPT so as to enable the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to perform its tasks and verify the reduction of nuclear arsenals, whose existence is the most dangerous threat to mankind. Equally important, we must encourage States to possess and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We have affirmed many times that the voluntary initiative of our country to reject all activities related to the production of prohibited materials should be a role model for countries possessing, or seeking to possess, nuclear power.

The United Nations was established to meet the needs and concerns of Member States. An honest and strict evaluation of the current situation and the Organization's achievements shows that we still need to work in unison to support it. Here we should contemplate the suggestions of our brother, the Leader of the Revolution, Colonel Muammar Al-Qadhafi, in his address to the Assembly during the sixty-fourth session.

The United Nations is at a crossroads. It must be reformed in order to achieve equality for all States. This is the real reform to which we all aspire: that the General Assembly become the main legislature, the organ that can produce binding resolutions, as it represents the real parliament of the world. The Security Council, on the contrary, should be the executive tool, implementing the resolutions of the Assembly. We have time and again called for permanent membership to be given to certain Member States, but, in order for the Council to accommodate small States as well, the ideal solution is to give Security Council membership to regional groups. That would secure the representation on the Council of all nations, without the exclusive veto right, which is contrary to democracy.

The African continent, which has been deprived of fair representation on the Security Council, should

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have a permanent seat. That is a legitimate request. It would put the African continent on an equal footing with all the other geopolitical groupings. The speedy pace of development in developing countries and the need to narrow the painful gap between the developing and developed countries require international cooperation within the framework of a new and effective partnership.

It goes without saying that the underdevelopment and poverty of most nations are the remnants of colonization and plunder, the theft of their resources and the illegal usurping of their riches. The former colonizers should apologize for those actions. It is time the Assembly took the necessary measures to criminalize colonialism, put the blame on the countries concerned and make them accountable for their historical responsibilities.

Nations suffered immensely from the two world wars, after which the United Nations was established. Since then the world has witnessed wars of aggression and illegal interventions which are a flagrant violation of all international customs and conventions.

The invasion of Iraq is a shameful example of such unfair and heinous wars. In order to achieve international justice, the United Nations is called upon to establish an international investigative panel to understand the motivation behind the invasion and to investigate the mass killings and executions of prisoners of war, including the head of State.

At this forum last year, the Leader of the Revolution, our brother, Colonel Muammar Al-Qadhafi, also raised the question of the political assassination of many personalities, including Dag Hammarskjöld, John Kennedy, Patrice Lumumba, Martin Luther King, Maurice Bishop and many Palestine Liberation Organization leaders. Those assassinations shocked the conscience of the world and created anger and rage the world over. However, justice was not done; the perpetrators enjoyed, and continue to enjoy, impunity. My country has called for an effective international instrument to secure an honest investigation of all the circumstances that led to the assassinations.

An alternative Headquarters for the United Nations has been suggested. We all know that certain considerations were in play in choosing the host country for the current Headquarters. But for the good conduct of our work, and to facilitate the work of the diplomatic missions accredited to the United Nations, it is imperative to choose another Headquarters, in another country. We must study all the bids presented by other countries, at the forefront of which is the offer by the Jamahiriya to host the Headquarters.

Anti-personnel mines are weapons used by weak States to defend their territories against invaders and to protect themselves. Strong and mighty States do not need such weapons, because they possess advanced arsenals. In this connection, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the Ottawa Treaty, should be amended in a way that takes into account the security interests of small States. The drafters should have included a provision for compensation to be paid to the States where such mines have been planted. My country suggests a review of the Treaty.

We must distinguish between the heinous phenomenon of terrorism and the deliberate biased distortion of the struggle of nations languishing under occupation. The Palestinian people are waging an incredible struggle against enemies nourished by a racist creed, who deny the right of that oppressed people to existence and self-determination.

The world understands the suffering and losses of the Palestinian people over 62 years. We cannot deny the facts of history. This question cannot be settled through the so-called peace process, because it will go on indefinitely. The solution, rather, is the establishment of one democratic State in which all can coexist, without discrimination, in accordance with the suggestion by our brother Muammar Al-Qadhafi in his "White Book" regarding Isratine.

In the framework of strengthening cooperation between the States of the South and those of the North, my country is to play host in October to an Arab-African summit. We shall also host, in November, a summit of Africa and the European Union, which will be a major transformation in the relationship between all the States concerned. We call on all stakeholders and all States to take part in the two summits at the highest level, as they are of prime importance.

In current circumstances, and in the framework of today's challenges, we have great hope that bold measures will be taken to strengthen the General Assembly, its authority and effectiveness so that it better represents the interests of all nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Sayid Badr bin Hamad Al-Busaidi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman.

Mr. Al-Busaidi (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to offer you, Sir, and your friendly country, Switzerland, our warmest congratulations on your election to preside over the sixty-fifth session of the General assembly. I also wish to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, for his fruitful efforts in conducting the deliberations of the previous session.

For more than 65 years, since its inception, the United Nations has registered tangible achievements. It has offered assistance and expertise in the socio-economic and environmental spheres, as well as in the cause of international security and peace, and has contributed to the establishment of stability in a number of regions of the world.

The Sultanate of Oman hopes that at this session the Assembly will make unprecedented progress in our shared pursuit of international peace and security, as well as prosperity.

The international community meets today in challenging times, faced with a whole range of thorny issues, from ongoing political instability to security challenges, financial crises, economic and environmental problems, the nuclear question and non-proliferation. It may be useful to recall here the lesson that such challenges can best be met through dialogue and positive participation by all, aimed at arresting threats to international peace and security.

The floods in Pakistan led to the dislocation of more than 20 million Pakistanis, who have lost their homes and are still experiencing tragic suffering, despite the continuing international rescue efforts. More outside assistance, expertise and capabilities are needed to help Pakistan overcome this tragedy and mitigate its consequences on the ground, as well as push ahead with the reconstruction process.

Those floods, the volcanic eruption in Iceland and the H1N1 epidemic, for example, are recent phenomena that have highlighted how interconnected the States of the world are and the need for international cooperation. What affects one corner of the world can truly have sweeping impacts across the globe.

The United Nations, its specialized agencies and legal organs were established after devastating wars, in the aftermath of the First and Second World Wars. Although the international community has not yet been able to find the means to resolve complex political problems, the United Nations offers multilateral mechanisms and goals that have played an enormous part in the reduction or neutralization of many crises. In addition, it plays key roles in helping developing countries in numerous specialized fields related to socio-economic development and the protection of the environment.

We believe that the effectiveness of the United Nations must reach a new level. This requires that the permanent members of the Security Council accept a reorganization of the United Nations, including an expansion of its administrative base, with fair management of world trade interests, in a way which makes Member States feel that it is an Organization for all.

We look forward to seeing the international community conduct a comprehensive review of the requirements for international peace and security, in view of all the lessons learned from wars in the past century and in this century.

We also look forward, Mr. President, along with you and all Member States, to a world of lasting security, characterized by good intentions and confidence in the future, a world where all peoples enjoy shining freedom and the beauty of life. We look forward to the day when dialogue prevails on the basis of accepting the other, regardless of social and cultural variations between human communities. We believe that dialogue between Governments, which differ in their perspectives on issues, will lead to a clearer system of global partnership and coexistence, in which development, welfare and prosperity prevail.

The Sultanate of Oman believes strongly that part of its responsibilities in the context of development is to make the Omani person the effective mover of the wheel of development. Therefore, my country has dedicated all resources towards that goal, especially with regard to education at all levels and medical care for every individual.

The people of Oman and their Government play their roles in society and participate effectively in everything concerning the life of the Omani citizen through the Council of Oman, with its two chambers: the Council of State and the Consultative Council. The role of the Omani citizen along the path of his country's development is central and indispensable, stemming from the firm conviction of the leader of Oman's renaissance, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, that life is created for mankind, male and female, that

freedom is the core of life, and that free positive expression is the seed of creativity, which is the fuel for development. With that insightful vision of His Majesty, the Sultanate of Oman is moving towards the future with firm determination.

We wish to stress our strong belief in the absolute necessity of finding a solution to the chronic conflict in the Middle East. Although we support the direct negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis, sponsored by the United States of America, we still feel that the Israeli policy is vague with regard to accepting Israel's responsibility towards the requirements of peace: the establishment of an independent, sovereign and viable Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and Israel's withdrawal from all Arab lands to the borders of 4 June 1967.

We look forward to an active, positive and continuing role by United States President Barack Obama in order to reach a just and comprehensive settlement. We call upon Israel to grasp this historic opportunity to establish partnership in peace and security with the Arab countries.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on Her Excellency Ms. Aurelia Frick, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Justice and Cultural Affairs of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Ms. Frick (Liechtenstein): It is a great honour for me to speak to the Assembly today, 20 years after the admission of Liechtenstein to the United Nations. Membership of the United Nations is one of the cornerstones of our foreign policy and the central platform for global diplomatic contacts. A strong United Nations, with a strong General Assembly, is a matter of self-interest to us.

It is therefore a special pleasure, Sir, to welcome you in the presidency of the Assembly. We look forward to working under your leadership. You have already shown wise leadership by placing this general debate under the broad theme of global governance, the discussion most urgently needed in the General Assembly, which is the main deliberative body of the Organization.

The very purpose of the Charter was in fact to establish a system of global governance, with the United Nations at its centre. Today, we must ask ourselves: Is the United Nations still at the centre of global governance? How does it relate to a number of other rising actors in the ever more crowded field of international relations? How can we improve global governance so that it better serves our peoples?

There can be no doubt, to our mind, that global governance can only be effective if it is truly global. That means global not only in reach, but also in participation. A system where a few make decisions that everyone else is expected to implement would be not only be unjust, but also ineffective. Past experience has shown time and again that multilateral action can be very effective when it is based on a broad political consensus, which is not the same as giving everyone a right to veto.

A strong fundamental agreement among States is the only way to ensure that decisions are effectively put into practice. The place where such decisions are possible, where genuine political consensus can be forged, is and remains the United Nations. We therefore have to invest in the United Nations to make the improvements that are required, instead of looking for solutions outside.

It is with this general philosophy in mind that we view efforts by different groupings, most prominently the Group of 20, to discuss questions of global reach. We certainly welcome the fact that the largest developed nations and the most powerful emerging Powers gather to discuss matters that affect the global economic and financial architecture.

The recent crisis has illustrated how important — indeed, indispensable — common action by the Group of 20 in such situations can be. And more is to be done to address the systemic issues that led to the crisis in the first place. We will continue to support those activities. At the same time, inclusion and participation should be placed higher on the Group's agenda, and its work should be better integrated with that of the United Nations system. The quality of the discussions within the Group of 20 and the effectiveness of their outcomes would greatly benefit from an approach based on "variable geometry" — bringing in the views of all those who are directly affected by the subject matter under consideration.

We are therefore an active member of the Global Governance Group, coordinated by Singapore, which seeks to promote the principles of inclusion and participation. We are grateful to the hosts of the next two Group of 20 summits, Korea and France, for their constructive exchange with Global Governance Group

Ministers yesterday here in New York. We look forward to continuing this dialogue.

We welcome the work of the Group of 20 and other groupings that seek to contribute to global solutions. At the same time, they can only deal with a limited number of issues. And, more importantly, they can never be a substitute for genuine multilateralism, which must continue to take place inside the United Nations. But we can only safeguard this central place of the United Nations if we can put it to use to find effective solutions to problems such as climate change, disarmament and other areas where results have been insufficient. If we continue to underachieve in the United Nations framework, we must not be surprised if solutions are sought elsewhere.

The United Nations continues to be the centre of global governance in the area of peace and security, the domain of the Security Council. The Council has the power to make decisions that are binding upon Member States, including on the use of force. This is the strongest tool available in international law. Yet its effectiveness is increasingly undermined by the perception that decisions of the Council lack the required political legitimacy.

A central ingredient of that perception is the Council's composition. Everybody agrees that it no longer reflects today's geopolitical realities. And yet an agreement to change it has been elusive for well over a decade. We believe that there could be a middle ground in the negotiations: the creation of a new category of seats allowing States to serve permanently on the Council, if the wider membership elects them to do so, on a recurrent basis. It seems to us the only logical approach towards a compromise, given the various positions around the table.

But the principal question may well be one of timing. If States increasingly believe that the Security Council can only be reformed in a climate of serious institutional crisis, a view with which we disagree, then we must reconsider the wisdom of trying to find a negotiated solution at this time.

Of no less importance for the legitimacy of the Council's work is the way in which it arrives at its decisions. Addressing the way in which the Council conducts its work is one of the biggest governance challenges we face in the United Nations system. If the Council is indeed to carry out its functions on behalf of the entire membership, as mandated by the Charter, it must be ready to listen to those it represents — especially when they are directly affected by its work.

The group of small five countries, of which we are a member, has over the last few years initiated a process of reflection and gradual improvements that is very much in the interests of the Council itself. We look forward to continuing this process, with both the permanent and the elected members of the Council.

The role of the United Nations in global governance depends not only on the performance of its intergovernmental organs, but to a great degree also on the performance of the Secretariat. This is an enormous responsibility on the shoulders of all our international civil servants, especially the Secretary-General himself.

We saw a few years ago how much damage this Organization can suffer from management failures and system breakdowns in the areas of procurement and accountability. A number of important reforms have been undertaken since. Most notably, we have strengthened internal oversight and accountability. But can we be confident that we have now appropriately managed the risk of another system breakdown in the future? Clearly, more needs to be done in this area, in particular to fully implement some of the management reform measures already taken.

The strongest emerging tool in our system of global governance is the dimension of justice. We have made tremendous normative and institutional progress in this area in the recent past. At the same time, we are struggling with the challenge to reconcile peace and justice in particular. How can we balance the dignity of victims and the justice owed to them with the likelihood of preventing further crimes? That is a choice nobody will want to face.

But experience shows that there is no contradiction between peace and justice over the long run. And there is a broad international consensus that there can be no impunity for the worst crimes under international law, and therefore no amnesties.

Given the massive crimes committed against civilian populations all over the world, this common stance against impunity is more important than ever. It is embodied by the International Criminal Court, whose effects are felt across the globe. Most important, though, it is also leading States to make greater efforts to fulfil their obligations to investigate and prosecute domestically. These are developments of truly historic dimensions.

We are only at the beginning of our efforts to integrate the justice dimension into our overall governance structure. This integration will not be a quick or easy process. But we must not shy away from these discussions, and we have to approach them with both an open mind and a determination to stand firmly on the principle of fighting impunity.

The challenges in global governance are numerous and interlinked. The governance architecture reflected in the Charter gives us the possibility of addressing them. It is up to us to make the necessary political investments to make this system work for our peoples.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Kamel Morjane, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia.

Mr. Morjane (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, Sir, I warmly congratulate you and the friendly Swiss Confederation on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, and wish you every success in your noble mission. We are convinced that your great political and diplomatic experience will provide the best conditions for the success of this session and enrich its contents. This will help achieve the objectives and aspirations we all cherish, especially as regards the theme of the general debate: "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance".

I take this opportunity to renew my congratulations to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki and to the sisterly Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, for his valuable efforts as President at the sixty-fourth session, his deep knowledge of international affairs and his wise approach in dealing with crucial, complex and delicate issues, thus serving the interests of our peoples and nations and enhancing the role of the General Assembly in international relations.

I also wish to express my great respect to Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General, for his commendable efforts at the head of the Secretariat to further enhance the position of our prestigious Organization and promote its performance, so that it can meet the many challenges posed on the international scene. In this context, Tunisia reaffirms its support for all the efforts of the Secretary-General, and of the United Nations in general, to promote peace, stability, security and development in all countries of the world.

Tunisia highly values the important historic step made during the previous session in the process of reforming the United Nations. I refer to the adoption of resolution 64/289, which reaffirms the importance we all attach to the development of the United Nations system and the promotion of complementarity between its activities and programmes. That applies especially to those pertaining to women, for whom a new unified Entity has been created to deal with all issues related to gender equality and the empowerment of women. I take this opportunity to renew our congratulations to its head, Ms. Bachelet. We wish her every success.

Under the leadership of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Tunisia attaches crucial importance to these issues. Women, in fact, have a strategic role in our civilizational project, and are considered a partner in making all our national choices. Tunisia strongly believes that democracy cannot be built, and comprehensive development cannot be achieved, without the active involvement of women in public life, and that promoting society to higher levels depends on enhancing the conditions of women in all fields. This conviction stems from our vision of human rights in their comprehensiveness, inseparability and complementarity.

The prestigious status that Tunisian women enjoy today is confirmed by figures and indicators pertaining to human development and women's involvement in all fields. They now represent 30 per cent of the country's working population. They hold 30 per cent of decision-making positions and other positions of responsibility. They represent 33 per cent of the judicial corps — judges and lawyers — and 42 per cent of the medical corps. In higher education, girls account for 60 per cent of the total number of students. In the legislative branch, women's presence has been reinforced to reach 30 per cent in the Chamber of Deputies and 16 per cent in the Chamber of Advisers.

It is indeed a source of pride for Tunisia to be ranked first internationally in terms of fighting violence against women and guaranteeing their right to free movement and ownership of property, to be ranked first in the Arab world in terms of offering women opportunities for economic participation, and to be ranked first in Africa in terms of women's per capita income.

The Tunisian presidency of the Arab Women Organization (AWO), in the person of Tunisia's first lady, is in line with that approach. Mrs. Leila Ben Ali

has endeavoured to spread the culture of gender equality, to further improve the condition of women in Arab societies, to allow them to enjoy their rights and accomplish their duties, and to preserve their dignity. All this, in fact, constitutes a civilizational and strategic stake and an integral part of the concept of Arab national security and human security in all its dimensions.

As part of the various pioneering initiatives and activities of the Arab Women Organization, Tunisia will next month host the third AWO Conference, with the theme "The Arab woman, a partner in sustainable development".

Since the change of 7 November 1987, Tunisia has adopted a comprehensive and balanced development policy based on the inseparability of the economic and social dimensions, a policy that reconciles the requirements of an economy based on the principles of profitability and efficiency and an equitable social policy in which there is no room for exclusion or marginalization, guaranteeing a decent life for all citizens.

The electoral programme of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali for the 2009-2014 term of office, "Together we meet the challenges", and the five-year development plan for the period 2010-2014 have both made a reality of those choices, reflecting a determination to further enhance the process of democracy and pluralism, to move political life in Tunisia towards further modernity and continuous reform, and to launch a new process of development based on the economy of knowledge and intelligence.

As part of that ambitious, future-oriented plan, Tunisia has attached crucial importance to youth as the pillar of the present and the builder of the future, through regularly organizing national youth consultations to explore the concerns, expectations and views of young people. The results of those consultations are taken into consideration in preparing development plans. Furthermore, Tunisia proclaimed 2008 the Year of Comprehensive Dialogue with Tunisian Youth. That event, with massive participation by different youth categories, was crowned with the adoption of a Youth Pact signed by all the national organizations concerned and the elite of Tunisian youth.

Keen on consecrating this policy at the international level and on involving the world community in supporting it, our country launched during the previous session of the General Assembly an initiative to proclaim 2010 International Year of Youth, to consolidate the position of youth in all societies of the world, youth being at the forefront of the forces of progress embracing noble universal values. Tunisia expresses its deep pride over Member States' unanimous support for this initiative, which the General Assembly adopted in resolution 64/134.

Tunisia also takes pride in the fact that on 12 August the Secretary-General himself chaired the launch of the festivities celebrating the International Year of Youth; he did so at Headquarters, in the presence of hundreds of representatives of the world's youth.

Tunisia calls on all Governments, international and regional organizations, and youth institutions, to establish adequate plans of action, programmes and activities to celebrate the International Year of Youth in a way that makes a reality of its motto, "Dialogue and mutual understanding", and leads to the adoption of an international pact to bind the world's youth to common universal values. I take this opportunity to express Tunisia's appreciation for the initiatives of Turkey, Singapore and Mexico in organizing important international youth events last August.

Throughout its modern history, Tunisia has remained committed to the principles and values of peaceful coexistence, good-neighbourliness, fraternity and mutual support. It has tirelessly endeavoured to promote relations of fraternity, friendship and cooperation with all peace-loving countries, and has invariably advocated peace, security and justice in the world.

Since the change of November 1987, Tunisia has given particular attention to the promotion of relations of fraternity and cooperation with Arab Maghreb countries, based on its strong belief in the unity of destiny and the inevitability of Maghreb integration. While reaffirming its adherence to the Arab Maghreb Union as a historic gain and an irrevocable strategic choice, Tunisia is committed to pursuing efforts jointly with sisterly Maghreb countries to realize the aspirations of the Maghreb peoples for complementarity, integration and solidarity. This commitment stems from a deep common civilizational, historic and geographic belonging, and is imposed by the successive economic fluctuations and the deep and ever-accelerating changes taking place in our world today in all political, social and cultural fields.

At the Arab level, Tunisia will firmly pursue its efforts to promote joint Arab action and establish solid

foundations for an efficient inter-Arab economic complementarity.

Tunisia has continuously played an efficient role in dealing with Arab causes, in the forefront of which is the Palestinian cause, through its firm and unwavering position supporting the brotherly Palestinian people at all stages of their legitimate struggle, and calling for a fair, durable and comprehensive solution that can put an end to the suffering of our Palestinian brothers and allow them to recover their legitimate national rights and establish their independent State on their land.

In this context, Tunisia expresses its deep concern about the situation in the Middle East, as a result of Israel's disrespect for international legality and the basic principles of the peace process, its persistence in the settlement policy and its attempts to obliterate the Arab-Muslim identity of the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

Tunisia expresses its hope that the resumption of direct peace talks, launched on 2 September in Washington under the sponsorship of the United States, will meet the legitimate aspirations of the brotherly Palestinian people.

We also call on all the influential parties on the international scene, particularly the Quartet, to act to bring Israel to adhere to the requirements of peace, on the basis of international legality, the principles of the peace process, and the Arab Peace Initiative, and in accordance with a specific time schedule that covers all the relevant main points.

Tunisia also reiterates its call for an end to the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan and the remaining occupied Lebanese territories, in accordance with international legality, so that all the peoples of the region can enjoy security and peace, and devote their efforts to construction and development for a better future.

Moreover, Tunisia hopes that the efforts made will promote peace and security in Iraq, Yemen, the Sudan and Somalia, within a climate of unity and national harmony.

Tunisia attaches particular importance to its belonging to Africa, based on its belief in the importance of its integration in its geographic environment and the expansion of the fields of cooperation and solidarity with sisterly African countries. Since the 7 November change, our country has endeavoured to realize this policy by reaffirming its commitment to the principles of the African Union, and continuously supporting all initiatives aimed at promoting the continent, achieving development for its peoples, and preserving its potentialities, within a climate of security and stability.

Tunisia has spared no effort to contribute to the promotion of peace and security in the African continent, through participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations, supporting conflict-prevention mechanisms, and continuously acting for the eradication of hotbeds of tension.

Moreover, our country has continuously called on African countries to play an active role and to find adequate solutions to their problems through activating the central organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the first regional experience of preventive diplomacy, then through the African Peace and Security Council, which has helped re-establish stability in a number of sisterly African countries.

We reaffirm Tunisia's support for all the efforts of the African Union, which proclaimed 2010 the Year of Peace and Security in Africa, so that peace and stability would reign all over the continent, which is a responsibility of the international community as a whole.

In line with those principles and with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Tunisia calls on developed nations to act promptly to meet the needs of the African continent and of developing countries in general, by using the existing international and regional mechanisms to ensure decent living standards for African peoples.

I take this opportunity to stress the need to activate the World Solidarity Fund, created by the General Assembly in 2002, upon Tunisia's initiative, to serve as an efficient international mechanism for sustainable development, capable of achieving the MDGs, particularly the Goal of reducing the poverty rate by half by 2015.

At the Euro-Mediterranean level, Europe is currently an essential partner of Tunisia in various fields. Our country has time-honoured historic relations with Europe. Yet we consider that our relations still need to be further enhanced and developed, through an equitable, solidarity-based partnership that rests on mutual respect and is in line with our strategic and civilizational choices in terms of political reform and

economic, social and cultural development. This will strengthen the ties of cooperation and solidarity, and help reduce disparities between the countries and peoples of the two shores of the Mediterranean. On the basis of those principles Tunisia supported the establishment of the Union for the Mediterranean, a promising initiative that can create a new dynamism in Euro-Mediterranean relations, promote a positive interaction to meet the coming challenges, and enhance security and stability in our Mediterranean region.

Tunisia is endeavouring to respond positively to the huge changes occurring on the international scene, by developing the mechanisms of consultation and cooperation with all the American and Asian countries. Our country attaches great importance to the promotion of its relations with large regional blocs in the American and Asian continents, so as to enrich cooperation and explore new fields for a strong partnership serving mutual interests. In this context, at the end of this year Tunisia will host the Japan-Arab Economic Forum. It will also host, in 2012, the Fifth Ministerial Meeting of the China-Arab Cooperation Forum.

Tunisia is also keen on promoting rapprochement with South American countries, within an Arab or African framework.

The values of mutual support and solidarity, which constitute the pillar of our country's policy and orientation, and which have now become a deeply-anchored tradition, demand that we give immediate assistance to countries stricken by natural disasters, which cause thousands of deaths in many countries of the world. Tunisia has responded promptly to the urgent calls by the Secretary-General to help disaster-stricken countries, such as Pakistan, which was recently ravaged by floods, and Haiti, which early this year was hit by a devastating earthquake, in which Tunisia and the United Nations lost one of their eminent diplomats, known for his great competence and generous devotion, the late Hédi Annabi, head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

Today, the world urgently needs to adopt an efficient policy to protect the environment, so as to spare humanity the adverse consequences of climate change, which over the past three decades has caused the international community huge economic losses.

The Assembly is certainly aware that climate change has a serious impact on stability in many countries, given the many problems caused, especially by global warming, drought and floods, and the resulting degradation of harvests and scarcity of water resources. Once again, Tunisia underlines the need to accelerate the pace of international talks on climate change, while giving priority to human interests over economic benefits, so as to reach an agreement guaranteeing that a minimum of measures will be taken to meet the huge challenges posed by climate change, particularly in the developing and the least developed countries.

Tunisia calls for the establishment of a decisive intervention programme to help remedy the effects of climate change and the problems it causes in terms of ecosystems, farming policies, and international food security in general. In this context, Tunisia reiterates its support for the African position and underlines the importance of helping African countries to face the effects of climate change. Tunisia commends the attention given by Japan and Korea to this issue. We hope that the forthcoming Mexico summit will produce positive results that can help achieve the objectives in this vital field.

At the present session the Assembly has devoted a large part of its agenda to the evaluation of our countries' achievements in the implementation of the MDGs, five years before 2015. Implementing the Goals and meeting the challenges resulting from the new world order, with the deep changes that it has generated, require that we step up action to embody the principles of the Charter in international relations, and to anchor the culture of dialogue and the values of tolerance, civilizational communication and solidarity among peoples.

Tunisia reaffirms its determination to continue actively contributing to joint international action to find adequate, fair and durable solutions to current problems, through joining in all efforts based on dialogue, mutual respect, consensus and mutual support within the framework of the United Nations. That is the ideal framework for international action to promote security, peace and stability in the world, so that our peoples can apply all their efforts and capacities for comprehensive and sustainable development and for realizing their legitimate aspirations for prosperity and a decent standard of living.

The current international situation can only strengthen our adherence to the United Nations and its founding principles, and bolster our determination to

reaffirm its central role in meeting challenges and to confer more efficiency on its activities and programmes, given its pivotal role in global governance.

In this regard, Tunisia hopes that Member States will reach the largest possible consensus for introducing the necessary reforms into the United Nations system, especially as regards the composition of the Security Council, and for giving more transparency and efficiency to the Organization's performance; that is in addition to further enhancing the role of the General Assembly, which includes all the Member States, and that of the Economic and Social Council.

To conclude, I once again wish all success to the Assembly at the current session, at which we hope it will make constructive recommendations that serve all the peoples of the world, promote peace and stability, offer wider prospects for progress and prosperity, and help meet challenges with confidence and efficiency.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on His Excellency Mr. R.M. Marty Natalegawa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): First I congratulate you, Sir, on your assuming the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. I am sure that under your able leadership our deliberations will be fruitful. Let me also commend your predecessor, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for the wisdom with which he guided the Assembly at its previous session.

The theme of our session, "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance", is both timely and well chosen. As we enter the second decade of the twenty-first century, humankind faces a multitude of challenges, challenges that are complex, multifaceted and transnational; challenges that defy national solutions alone; indeed, challenges that demand international cooperation. Those are precisely challenges of the type that the United Nations is potentially best equipped to meet.

Such a central role for the United Nations derives, above all, from its near universal membership — a representative United Nations. It derives also from its effectiveness, its capacity to deliver results: an effective United Nations that is capable of delivering peace and security worldwide; a United Nations that equally serves the interest of all nations, developed and developing, large and small; a United Nations that provides a robust institutional support for efforts to achieve prosperity and equitable development for all; a United Nations that advocates not only political and civil rights, but also economic and social rights, to all people around the world; a United Nations that promotes democracy and justice; in short, a United Nations that can play a central role in global governance.

A United Nations that is at the forefront in addressing global challenges requires that we, its Members, must move together in cooperative action: countries of the North and South, East and West, developed and developing. We must each contribute to the resolution of problems and not simply accentuate divisions, for there is no monopoly of wisdom amongst any one of us.

Each Member State can contribute to meeting the challenges to the international community. Therefore, our Organization, the United Nations, must have the wherewithal, the means, to ensure that the full problem-solving potential of every nation is unleashed. Therein rests the importance of reform of the United Nations.

The Security Council must better reflect the contemporary world, not that of 1945. A more representative Council would be a more effective Council.

The General Assembly must be revitalized. A more efficient Assembly is a more effective Assembly.

The Economic and Social Council must be made more relevant, in accordance with its Charter-mandated responsibilities.

Not least, the full potential of the Secretariat must be harvested. Its structure and organization must be effective and efficient and made more cohesive.

The central role of the United Nations in global governance is due not only to its capacity to reform, to enhance its representative character, but also to its ability to deliver in overcoming contemporary global challenges, to deliver on its Charter-provided purposes, or, as the Charter eloquently puts it in paragraph 4 of Article 1, "To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations".

As a Member State, Indonesia will do its part. We shall continue to contribute to United Nations peacekeeping efforts. We shall also strive to ensure that the recent positive momentum on the issue of disarmament is maintained. Therefore, Indonesia is on

track to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Indonesia will also work tirelessly to ensure that the United Nations continues to discharge its historic responsibilities on the question of Palestine. Thus we welcome and support the resumption of direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine. This is a precious opportunity for Palestine and Israel to find solutions on all final status issues.

We therefore strongly deplore the decision by the Israeli Government not to extend the moratorium on the building of settlements in the occupied territory. Such a decision does not in any way contribute to a climate conducive for the direct negotiations.

We will continue to contribute to the capacity-building of Palestine, to support the Palestinian people in preparing for the day when they finally exercise their right of sovereignty.

Today's global threat to security demands more effective global action. The United Nations must do its part to promote global cooperation to address non-traditional security threats: terrorism, people smuggling, drug trafficking, piracy and money laundering, to cite just a few.

The United Nations must also contribute to achieving common prosperity, to make a better world for all. We support the strengthening of the United Nations frameworks for the attainment of equitable and sustainable development. The Rio Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation have been the multilateral linchpin of this.

We welcome the renewed commitment of all Member States to meet the MDGs by 2015. We need to strengthen genuine partnership to deliver on these promises and to turn hope into reality.

The challenges we face in attaining equitable and sustainable development are compounded by the real and imminent threat of climate change. Addressing climate change is therefore essential. Accordingly, the United Nations should ensure that the sixteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Mexico, results in a consensus agreement that effectively addresses climate change. It should build on the Copenhagen Accord and the progress made in the two Working Groups in the fifteenth Conference.

We also look forward to the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development as an opportunity to enhance coordination, synergy and coherence in efforts, including within the United Nations system, to address challenges to sustainable development.

We need to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to deal with a complex array of natural disasters, including the delivery of international humanitarian assistance.

We attach great importance to the review process of the Human Rights Council in 2011. We need to ensure that the Council can truly support all countries, developed and developing, to promote cooperation in the field of human rights.

And, not least, we need to see the United Nations contribute effectively to the promotion of tolerance and mutual respect among cultures, religions, faiths and civilizations.

We, the Members of the United Nations, must promote better synergy between the United Nations and regional organizations and initiatives. Many global problems become more manageable if there are simultaneous efforts to address them at the regional level. That is why Indonesia continues to promote the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Before the end of this year an ASEAN-United Nations summit will be held in Viet Nam. Meanwhile, the countries of ASEAN and other countries in the larger Asia-Pacific region are building a regional architecture that will bring about and sustain dynamic equilibrium in the region. ASEAN will, of course, be the driving force in the building of this architecture.

While the promotion of democracy is a global concern, we are also vigorously promoting democratic values in our own region, through ASEAN and beyond. In 2008, Indonesia launched the Bali Democracy Forum, the only intergovernmental forum on political development in Asia. In doing so, we created an inclusive platform for sharing experiences and best practices and giving mutual support in the development of democracy in the region. This December, we will hold the third Bali Democracy Forum, this time on the theme of "Democracy and the promotion of peace and stability".

We in Indonesia cherish our democratic transformation. As the world's third largest democracy,

Indonesia is proof that Islam, democracy and modernization can go hand in hand. But democracy is not something that can be achieved once and for all time. It is an endless journey, an unremitting process. It must keep evolving to remain capable of addressing new challenges. That is why we keep fine-tuning our political institutions, so that they become more effective in serving the people.

The same is true of the United Nations. It needs continuous reform, so that it serves all nations, developed and developing; so that it will be a more effective instrument of humankind; so that it will deliver peace and the dividends of peace. It is now time to make the United Nations deliver.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates.

Sheikh Al-Nahyan (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. We are confident that your expertise in international affairs will enable you to wisely and capably guide the work of the General Assembly, and we wish you every success in your endeavours.

I would also like to thank your predecessor, Mr. Ali Treki, for his successful leadership of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, and to thank Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General, for his great efforts to re-energize the role of this international Organization in promoting world peace and security and development.

The international community continues to face daunting challenges that demand strengthened collective action, increased joint international efforts in the United Nations framework and a serious move towards reform of its organs in a responsible and balanced manner, in order to enable the United Nations effectively to play its primary role in addressing the major challenges facing the international community.

My Government wishes to reiterate in this forum its deep regret at the continued Iranian occupation of our three islands: Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa. It demands the return of the islands, including their regional waters, airspace, continental shelf and exclusive economic zone, to its full sovereignty as integral parts of the United Arab Emirates. All procedures and measures taken by the Iranian authorities since their occupation of the islands are null and void and have no legal effect, no matter how long the occupation may last.

We look forward to seeing the Iraqi parties form a national Government that continues to build its security, political and economic institutions, extend its authority over the entire territory of Iraq and achieve a comprehensive national reconciliation, which is the real guarantee for stabilizing the political process in Iraq and embracing all factions of Iraqi society, with no exception or discrimination.

While we note with satisfaction the withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraq, we express our firm condemnation of all acts of violence and bombings that have targeted the Iraqi people. In this context, we reiterate the need to respect Iraq's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence, and to refrain from interfering in its internal affairs, in order to safeguard its Arab and Islamic identity.

The United Arab Emirates believes that peace in the Middle East and resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot be achieved without ending the Israeli occupation of the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories. Israel's withdrawal to the line of 4 June 1967, including East Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan Heights and the remaining occupied territories in southern Lebanon, is also required in order to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, and based on the principle of land for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The United Arab Emirates stands by the Palestinian National Authority, and supports the Palestinian people in their quest to achieve their national goals and restore their inalienable legitimate rights. We commend President Mahmoud Abbas for his persistent efforts to realize the interests of the Palestinian people and restore their rights.

We affirm our support for the position adopted by the Palestinian National Authority in the direct negotiations with the Israeli. We hope that the independent Palestinian State, with its capital Al-Quds Al-Sharif, will see the light of day next year.

We welcome the statement of Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States, to the General Assembly, and his strong commitment to the achievement of peace in the Middle East. We also welcome his emphasis on the importance of leading direct negotiations into final results within a year, and seeing Palestine take its seat

in the General Assembly at the sixty-sixth session. In this context, we rely on an effective American role, and active regional and international support for the peace process in the Middle East.

Our commitment to the achievement of peace as a strategic choice means that we must condemn the Israeli practices against the Palestinian people, including the collective punishment policy and the inhumane blockade imposed on the Palestinian people in Gaza. We also condemn other flagrant Israeli violations of international law and of the principles and purposes of the Charter.

In that connection, we emphasize that the continuation of the Israeli settlement activities, confiscation and Judaization of the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories run counter to the pursuit of peace. We say to Israel: Either choose to pursue peace or insist on pressing ahead with settlements. Combining the two is incompatible with peace.

The United Arab Emirates will continue to pursue its international policy guided by the purposes of the United Nations and the principles of its Charter, especially with regard to the promotion of international peace and security, the peaceful resolution of international disputes, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and compliance with the principles of international law.

We shall continue to make our distinct contributions to regional and international partnerships aimed at building a more peaceful, stable and just world, free of all forms of terrorism, violence, extremism, crime, discrimination, human rights violations, human trafficking, and any sort of humiliation or degradation of human dignity. We look forward to a world that promotes the principles of dialogue, interaction, mutual understanding, cooperation and interactive civilized coexistence among all religions and cultures, without any form of discrimination, the use of stereotypical images, hatred or denigration of religions: a world characterized by human peace, prosperity and development.

On that basis, we condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, wherever it exists, and stress the need to intensify regional and international efforts to combat and eliminate terrorism.

My country is an active member of regional and international partnerships and efforts designed to combat terrorism, including the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. We will continue our efforts to strengthen cooperation in the areas of intelligence exchange, capacity-building, combating and drying up sources of terrorism. We expect all other States to shoulder their responsibilities in order to get rid of this growing scourge.

In the meantime, we welcome the positive results of the West Point conference on combating terrorism, and look forward to the success of the next conference, to be held in the Republic of Korea.

As part of our efforts to strengthen international cooperation in addressing the challenges of climate change, and in order to assist States most at risk from the adverse effects of that phenomenon, we have initiated a partnership programme with the Pacific small island developing States, and we call upon the international community to support and expand the partnership at the global level. It is our hope that States parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change will achieve concrete results before the forthcoming Conference in Mexico.

We are pleased to see that the accord establishing the International Renewable Energy Agency has entered into force after ratification by the required number of States. In its capacity as host country, the United Arab Emirates continues to carry out its commitments to the Agency in order to enable it to perform its duties effectively.

My Government is moving forward with its peaceful nuclear energy programme. At the same time, it wishes to emphasize its commitment to all the requirements of nuclear non-proliferation and its compliance with the highest standards of transparency and nuclear safety. The United Arab Emirates has ratified the Additional Protocol to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In this context, we wish to express our satisfaction at the positive outcome of the recent Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty. We look forward to the implementation of the responsible and valid recommendations agreed in the Final Document of the Conference.

The United Arab Emirates is working on protecting the various aspects of human rights, and welcomes the establishment of a new international entity on women in the United Nations, UN Women, and the appointment of the Under-Secretary-General

for Women's Affairs. We are implementing various national programmes to empower women, enhance their participation in the decision-making process, and developing their status.

We attach great importance to the issue of human trafficking. We have therefore enacted legislation and developed national mechanisms compatible with our obligations under relevant international conventions and resolutions. We call upon the international community to develop an integrated global strategy to eliminate this scourge.

We support the activities of the Alliance of Civilizations Forum, and welcome the fact that its fourth session is to be held in the brotherly State of Qatar next year. We also commend the endeavours of Qatar to make the interfaith dialogue conference a permanent institution. We welcome the decision of the Emir of Qatar to establish a centre for interfaith dialogue in Doha.

We hope that our deliberations during this session will lead to positive results.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Minister for Foreign Affairs and African Integration of the Republic of Chad.

Mr. Mahamat (Chad) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Chad echoes previous speakers in warmly congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, and assures you of our desire to cooperate with you as you carry out your mission.

I also express my delegation's admiration for your predecessor, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, who skilfully guided the Assembly's work at the sixty-fourth session.

Our tribute and recognition also go to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his courage and passion in seeking solutions to the problems facing mankind.

Over the last two years the entire world has struggled against the effects of the financial, food and energy crises. The international cooperation underpinning that struggle has been exemplary and unprecedented. But, while it was able to curb the financial crisis in the rich countries, the poor countries continue to suffer from the effects of the food and energy crises, added to which are the negative effects of climate change on their environment.

The Republic of Chad welcomes the fact that the United Nations is focusing on development challenges, in particular the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and their financing, as evidenced by the recent high-level meeting. But we fear that once again the relevant recommendations that emerged from that meeting will not be implemented.

Over recent years our Organization and the international community have been particularly concerned about the Darfur crisis and its impact on relations between Chad and the Sudan, which have been fully normalized following the courageous decision of Mr. Idriss Déby Ino to travel to Khartoum and finalize reconciliation with his Sudanese counterpart, Mr. Omer Hassan Ahmat Al-Bashir.

The two countries agreed, among other measures, to establish a joint force to secure their common border. It is now patrolling the entire border to maintain security. High-level meetings are held regularly to assess the situation.

The two countries are also committed to providing no support of any kind to rebel forces in the respective countries, and they call upon those forces to lay down their arms and accept a political settlement. As always, the Government of the Republic of Chad favours dialogue.

Although relations between our two countries are being normalized, and there is a growing dialogue between the Government and the armed opposition in the Sudan, the situation in Darfur still merits special attention.

Chad, no doubt like the entire international community, has a dream of peace in the Sudan, which is preparing for a major political event: the referendum on self-determination for southern Sudan. That is a high-risk undertaking if the process leading up to it is not controlled, and if the balloting is not organized under the best conditions of independence, security and transparency.

We fear that failures in those respects could compromise peace and security in the Sudan and the subregion. That fear is reinforced by an appeal made this morning by the Archbishop of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan, who expressed concern about the serious risks of war. In addressing the appeal to the

United Nations and to the Governments of the United States and Great Britain, the guarantors of the peace agreements, Archbishop Daniel Deng drew our attention to the significance of those risks. We must take account of that legitimate concern.

In any event, the international community must understand that the referendum in southern Sudan, whatever the outcome, will have an impact on the rest of Africa.

My country would like to see the Sudan's unity and integrity maintained, but the Sudanese themselves are the only judges of their future, and Chad will respect their choice.

On the other side of the Sudanese frontier, in eastern Chad, there are still 290,000 Sudanese refugees and 180,000 displaced Chadians, who have been there since the Darfur crisis erupted in 2003. They are living in precarious environmental and social conditions; this is not to mention the situation of the host populations, who also deserve more attention in order to restore the natural balance disrupted by the massive influx of refugees and displaced persons.

In anticipation of the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), Chad has committed itself to having its own forces assume the protection of those refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as of United Nations and associated humanitarian personnel. Thus, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1923 (2010) of 25 May, the Government has developed a sustainment plan to ensure support for elements of the Integrated Security Detachment (DIS) post-MINURCAT. It must be remembered that DIS is composed entirely of national elements of the gendarmerie and police whose mission it is to maintain order and the rule of law in the refugee camps and in areas with concentrations of internally displaced persons, and to help ensure the safety of humanitarian operations.

Respect for security and humanitarian commitments in Chad has led the Government to make a financial effort of around $12 million a month. That does not include the cost of the joint Chad-Sudan forces' operations to secure the border.

Logistical support for security and for managing humanitarian needs requires the combined efforts of all. Therefore, the Government intends to organize in Chad in the coming days consultation with all partners in order to mobilize the necessary financial and logistic support for DIS.

We take this opportunity to reiterate, once again, the Government's readiness to continue to cooperate with the United Nations in all initiatives that will benefit peace and security in eastern Chad, the Central African Republic and Darfur. Accordingly, Chad welcomes the meeting on the Central African Republic held on the margins of the Millennium Development Goals summit. We hope that that important meeting enabled the international community to understand the extent of the challenges facing that country and to assist effectively both in the organization of the coming elections and in the maintenance of peace throughout its territory.

We believe that the cessation of armed incursions into the area will have satisfactory effects on the phenomenon of recruiting child soldiers. The Government had already firmly resolved to eradicate such recruitment, long carried out by the armed groups. It was with that clear intention that my country hosted last June a regional conference on ending the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups. My country makes its full contribution alongside the contributions of the African Union and the United Nations.

In national politics, a climate of trust between the Government and the democratic opposition has existed since implementation of the political agreement of 13 August 2007. This has enabled the various political actors to agree on the conduct of our electoral process. An independent joint national electoral commission has been set up to organize consultations on the various local and national elections, and it has decided on the schedule for local, parliamentary and presidential elections in the first quarter of 2011.

With regard to development, the country has spent 60 per cent of its additional oil resources in the social sectors and on basic infrastructure as the basis of its socio-economic development. However, funding needs for the MDGs in 2008-2011 show a gap of more than $3.5 billion. Domestic financial resources remain woefully short of our needs. Additional resources are therefore essential to finance our development. Accordingly, we call for the support of international financial institutions, including the World Bank, to reach the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

In spite of all those difficulties, the Government has implemented a social policy based on free access to education and exemption from all charges related to maternal health, HIV/AIDS and malaria.

On the environmental front, Chad has taken strong measures to protect the environment, including the prohibition of excessive cutting of green wood, to conserve our forests and savannahs and to fight desertification.

In addition, last June Chad hosted the first summit of heads of State and Government on the establishment of the Pan-African Great Green Wall Agency, and on its programme. Chad was given the honour of hosting the summit, organized by the Sahel countries, because of its pioneering role in the large-scale reforestation of the region. A national programme, "Green Belt", to plant more than 10 million trees a year throughout the country, began in 2009. Beyond the subregional aspect, such programmes integrate perfectly with global initiatives in the worldwide struggle against the ill effects of climate change, and therefore deserve the international community's support.

Moreover, in October Chad will host the eighth World Forum of Sustainable Development, whose theme will be "Save Lake Chad". Lake Chad, part of world heritage, is in danger of disappearing; it has shrunk from 25,000 square kilometres to less than 2,500 square kilometres in 40 years, and is a typical example of the disastrous consequences of climate change. I take this opportunity to invite all people of good will to take part in the Forum in large numbers.

In regard to international issues and the alarming increase in terrorist activities in several regions of Africa and throughout the world, we express our total condemnation of the gratuitous violence that threatens the peaceful and calm existence of innocent citizens.

I turn to the issue of Israel and Palestine. We remain constant in our support for this Organization and the Government of the United States with regard to reaching a peace agreement allowing the peaceful coexistence of two sovereign States. To that end, we support President Barack Obama in his courageous initiative with the two parties. We sincerely hope that his mission will succeed.

Our world has changed considerably over the past 20 years. Peoples and States aspire to greater well-being, freedom and justice. Our common Organization must treat those aspirations as part of its primary vocation. My country therefore again calls on the Assembly to work for Security Council reform, without delay, in order to integrate Africa. The international community must not accept the marginalization of the African continent, which has so much to offer to the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on Her Excellency Ms. Maxine Pamela Ometa McClean, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados.

Ms. McClean (Barbados): I am honoured to address the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados.

The theme of this year's session, concerning the role of the United Nations, multilateralism and global governance, is timely, and it permits an examination of the complex issues facing the global community today. Moreover, it lends itself to an exploration of solutions to those issues as well as to restoration of the centrality of the United Nations and its organs.

A week ago leaders from every corner of the world met and confirmed that the global consensus on the United Nations Development Agenda remained intact. They pledged to spare no effort to ensure the fulfilment of our collective promise to the world's poorest and most vulnerable.

Barbados shares the view of the Secretary-General that the Millennium Development Goals must serve as "a blueprint for ending extreme poverty" (*A/65/PV.3*). The Goals are at the core of the global development agenda. They represent our common vision of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world, in which all human beings can enjoy better and safer lives. For the past decade these globally shared and endorsed set of priorities have inspired extraordinary efforts by Governments and non-State actors alike.

Now is not the time for complacency. Progress towards achievement of the Goals remains mixed, and, while success is still within our grasp, it is by no means certain. Our common task is therefore to convert this unprecedented consensus into collective action on all fronts and immediately implement what has been agreed in order to guarantee success by 2015. Failing this, the many words of the Outcome Document that we adopted a few days ago will simply serve as yet

another solemn reminder of human needs neglected and promises unfulfilled.

This display of global solidarity in the face of unparalleled economic uncertainty reminds us that the United Nations is an invaluable and indispensable instrument for its Member States and for the world's peoples, as we seek to respond to the challenges of our times. While we may not have the same degree of consensus on every pressing global problem, Barbados cannot contemplate the prospect of a world without an Organization such as this. No other entity can mobilize global political will and coordinated action around common causes, and provide a voice for the voiceless, like the United Nations.

Scarred by the bitter experience of two world wars and a great depression, the founders of this Organization had the foresight and wisdom to recognize that only through multilateralism and a strong and effective system of global governance, with the United Nations at its core, could lasting peace be maintained and international law upheld.

Today we bear witness to a world which is more interconnected and intertwined, yet in a real sense more deeply divided, than ever. Barbados is of the view that an enhanced and renewed system of global governance must be at the top of the global agenda. In this regard, Mr. President, Barbados fully supports your initiative to address this issue during the course of this sixty-fifth session. We must take stock and reflect in a holistic and comprehensive manner on the system of global governance, including the United Nations and its organs, to ensure that it truly delivers on the vision of our predecessors and serves the interests of all mankind, particularly the poor and the vulnerable.

Delivering global public goods such as global economic and financial stability; ensuring the promotion and protection of human rights; maintaining international peace and security; and ensuring environmental sustainability: those matters cannot be successfully addressed by States acting on their own, or even by coalitions of the willing. Finding effective solutions to those challenges and mobilizing collective action provides the most immediate and obvious reason for enhancing global governance and strengthening multilateral cooperation.

As United States President Harry Truman stated on 25 April 1945 at the birth of this Organization, in his address to the opening session of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, held in San Francisco:

> "Differences between men, and between nations, will always remain. In fact, if held within reasonable limits, such disagreements are actually wholesome. All progress begins with differences of opinion and moves onward as the differences are adjusted through reason and mutual understanding."

Renewing the vision of our predecessors must start with the United Nations and extend outwards to all organizations with a role in dispensing global governance.

During this session we must finalize the decades-long project of Security Council reform. If the Council is to retain its unique legitimacy it should be made more broadly representative of the international community as a whole, as well as of the geopolitical realities of today.

The Council's working methods must also be made to adhere to the highest standards of transparency, accountability and efficiency. Its outreach to non-members must be significantly improved.

Barbados continues to believe that the number of permanent and non-permanent seats on the Council should be increased, and that Brazil, Germany, India and Japan should join the ranks of the permanent members. Membership from the African Group must also be assured.

Sustained and widespread future prosperity will require major reforms in global economic governance as well as new approaches to global economic development. The global financial and economic crisis has made clear the extent of the interconnectivity of financial markets, as well as their inherent vulnerabilities. While there is no precedent for the current level of global financial and economic integration, the policies, rules and institutions established to govern those processes are predominately national in scope, and global mechanisms highly compartmentalized.

We can no longer postpone the task of reforming the institutions responsible for global economic and financial governance. They must be better equipped to address the challenge of a globalized and highly interdependent world. In this regard, Barbados welcomes the broadening of the Group of 8 to include

the participation of developing and emerging economies and the designation of the Group of 20 (G-20) as the premier forum for international economic cooperation.

We also recognize the important role played by the G-20 in stabilizing the global economy. We acknowledge its ambitious agenda to restore global growth and achieve needed reforms in the world's financial systems. However, the Group must significantly enhance its outreach to non-members, including the smallest members of the international community, particularly when issues affecting their economic viability and survival are under discussion. Furthermore, it must also demonstrate real leadership in breaking the impasse in the World Trade Organization and ensure a successful conclusion to the Doha Development Round. It must also ensure that reforms in the Bretton Woods institutions are accelerated.

Small States have traditionally played a crucial role in shaping global governance, and our voice should not be diminished in efforts to reform the current system. Barbados will play its part. It is against the background of articulating the role and importance of multilateralism and a strong and effective United Nations that I will explore the response of my country to these global challenges. I will also address the strategies to be pursued by this small nation intent on playing its part in this family of nations. Barbados is a small island developing State classified as a middle-income developing country. It faces significant vulnerabilities made real by the spectre of climate change and the associated natural disasters, the consequences of the recent financial and economic crises, and the threat posed by transnational criminal networks. My country has sought to take its place in a world characterized by increasing economic, environmental and social complexities. We take our place in a world in which the United Nations family continues to witness increasing economic interdependence and globalization, both posing challenges to national sovereignty.

Barbados shares the United Nations vision for a world able to achieve and surpass the Millennium Development Goals. We are committed to the fight against the ravages of HIV and AIDS and other infectious diseases. As a natural-resources-poor small island developing State, we have achieved much on the basis of our investment in human development, primarily in the areas of education and health. We have thus prioritized our responses to those global challenges in a manner that puts our people first. Our successes to date have been due to our investment in our key resource — our people. Given the emphasis on our people's development and the dangers posed to our population, we supported the resolution entitled "Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases" (resolution 64/265), introduced by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly in 2009. Our responses can be seen in our efforts to achieve our ultimate goal of crafting a green economy. We see the green economy as a tool for transforming our economy to achieve sustainable development. At the heart of this economic and social model is a commitment to people-centred development. Aligning our development strategy along this particular trajectory ensures a consistency not only with our global obligations but also, and more importantly, with our national values and in the best interests of all our citizens.

Even as the international community searches for a definition of the green economy, Barbados has simply defined this model as an integrated production, distribution, consumption and waste assimilation system that, at its core, reflects the fragility of our small island ecosystems as the basis for policy interventions for natural resource protection, business and investment choice, human development programming, and the facilitation of export market development strategies.

In pursuit of the green economy the Government of Barbados has undertaken an assessment of the opportunities and challenges of a green economy transition. Our focus is on the priority sectors of tourism, agriculture, transport and housing, along with cross-sectoral issues of water resources, energy and waste. In addition, we have partnered with the United Nations Environment Programme to promote a transition to a green economy, building on existing Barbados initiatives in the area of resource efficiency and the promotion of sustainable consumption and production. We believe that our experience in transitioning to a green economy will serve as a useful model for other small island developing States and small economies, and we intend to share our unique perspective with the international community in the preparatory process for the Rio+20 Summit in 2012.

The efforts of Barbados to transform its economy into a green economy and achieve sustainable

development will be undermined without ambitious and urgent global action to address climate change. The challenge of climate change remains one of the great threats to the survival and viability of Barbados and other small island developing States. Even as science points to a worsening situation, global emissions continue to rise and the prospects seem dim of arriving at an agreement to provide legal certainty in the fight against climate change. It is clear that the objective of an ambitious and comprehensive legally binding outcome will not be achieved in Cancún, Mexico, in December this year. Barbados nevertheless believes that the substantive outcomes at the sixteenth session of the Conference of Parties (COP-16) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must demonstrate that the international community remains committed to addressing the defining challenge of our time. In this regard COP-16 should deliver outcomes that: prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable, particularly in the areas of adaptation and finance; finalize issues on which there is a broad agreement and provide guidance and clarity on the difficult issues; and demonstrate progress on the delivery of the $30 billion fast-start financing pledged at Copenhagen. Critical to the success at Cancún is arriving at a common understanding of how, when and where an ambitious and legally binding international climate agreement will be finalized.

In 1994 Barbados had the distinct honour of hosting the first Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI) remain the essential blueprints for the sustainable development of small island developing States. Barbados welcomes the recently adopted outcome of the five-year review of the MSI and hopes that this will result in a renewal of the commitment of the international community to support the sustainable development of small island developing States. It is of great concern to Barbados that, 18 years after the international recognition of the special case of small island developing States at Rio, our unique and particular vulnerability is being challenged. Barbados is not prepared to renegotiate the special case of small island developing States but urges the international community to focus on the delivery of tangible and concrete actions to build resilience and promote sustainable development in small island developing States.

The January 2010 earthquake that devastated Haiti serves as a grim reminder of the fragility of island States to natural disasters. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, the Government of Barbados provided financial assistance, relief supplies and deployed a contingent of medical and security personnel as part of a CARICOM relief team. If Haiti is to realize its full potential, the international community must remain fully engaged in Haiti, and the many pledges of financial and technical support must be delivered on time. The Government and people of Haiti can be assured that Barbados will continue to be a partner in this rebuilding and reconstruction phase. Our commitment remains strong, and we will play our part in Haiti's long-term development. We call on all who have mobilized resources for the benefit of Haiti to work with countries like Barbados and in collaboration with the Government and people of Haiti to rebuild that country.

There is a very definite role for a reformed United Nations to assist countries like Barbados. The model economy being pursued by Barbados cannot be achieved by unilateral action.

As stated previously, the role of the United Nations is clear. It must generate the templates to be adopted and serve as a catalyst for action: it must seek to mediate where conflicts arise; it must work to ensure that there are reforms of the global economic and financial system to make it inclusive, transparent and supportive of the development aspirations of least developed countries and more developed countries; it must also facilitate South-South cooperation, supporting the efforts of these countries to share appropriate experiences and indigenous solutions.

Barbados shares your vision, Sir, for a strong, inclusive and open United Nations as the guarantor of global governance. Barbados maintains the strong position that responsibility for the setting of rules and the making of core decisions on matters of a global nature rightfully belongs within the ambit of the United Nations, given its primacy as the only legitimate forum for global action.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Moctar Ouane, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): It is a great privilege and signal honour for me to address the

Assembly on behalf of the President of the Republic of Mali, His Excellency Mr. Amadou Toumani Touré, who, because of a very busy schedule resulting from the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Mali's independence, is unable to be here with us today. He has expressly charged me with conveying to the Assembly his sincere greetings and his wishes for every success for the work of this current session.

At the outset I should like to convey to you, Sir, the warmest congratulations of the delegation of Mali on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. Your election is a tribute to your eminent professional skills and is also an expression of the unanimous recognition given by the international community to the commitment of your country, Switzerland, a friend of Mali, to the ideals of our Organization. I assure you of my delegation's constant support in fulfilling your mandate. Allow me also to express our deep appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for his deep commitment and the remarkable manner in which he guided our work during the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. In turn, I commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his constant efforts and his commitment to meeting the aims and objectives of this Organization.

On 28 September 1960, only a few days after the proclamation of independence, my country, Mali, became a Member of the United Nations. Today, on 28 September 2010, 50 years later, I, speaking to you from this selfsame rostrum, would like to reaffirm with force and conviction the commitment of the Republic of Mali to the promotion of the principles and purposes of the Charter, the establishment of friendly relations with all nations of the world and the promotion of international cooperation, and to contributing to the dawning of a world of peace, justice and progress.

Indeed, today a new Mali is on the rise. Under the leadership of President Amadou Toumani Touré, this new Mali continues to progress towards the development and well-being of its people, each day further building upon the gains of peaceful democracy, recognized worldwide as being exemplary, and further enhances its presence in Africa and on the international stage. Today, on 28 September 2010, I convey here and now to the peoples of the world, to the Governments of friendly countries, and to Mali's development partners, the greetings and gratitude of my country and reaffirm the solidarity and commitment of the Republic of Mali in our shared quest for a better world.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana), Vice-President, took the Chair.

This general debate has opened by setting out to tackle a timely subject, the reaffirmation of the central role of the United Nations in global governance. In this regard, Mali reiterates from the outset its faith in the capacity of the Organization to be a catalyst in the processes of global democratization and governance. In that connection my country, Mali, continues to call for a reform of the global economic and financial architecture, the only way to prevent the occurrence of even worse crises. In the same vein, Mali believes that just and equitable representation of all regions of the world must be guaranteed within our Organization, in particular through Security Council reform.

In that regard, Mali reaffirms its adherence to the Ezulwini Consensus and to the Sirte Declaration, adopted by the heads of State and Government of the African Union, and fully supports Africa's demand for two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats. A reformed Council would better reflect the geopolitical realities of the world today, thus contributing towards repairing the historical injustices towards Africa, the only region of the world not to have a permanent seat on the Security Council. In the same spirit Mali, together with all other Member States, will strive to reinforce the effectiveness of the role of the Council and to promote the revitalization of the General Assembly.

With only five years now to the 2015 deadline set to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and in spite of the tireless efforts made by many developing countries, millions of people worldwide are still waiting for the Millennium Declaration to take concrete effect. The High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, which has just concluded, would have been a useful opportunity for heads of States and Government to evaluate the progress made in various areas, draw lessons from the best practices and define approaches towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. For its part, the Republic of Mali is resolutely committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals in a sustainable manner through the adoption of a 10-year plan for the years 2006-2015, and through the implementation of a strategic framework for growth and poverty reduction and a project for economic and

social development, all of which focus in particular on agriculture and food security, education and health.

From this rostrum I invite the international community to continue to support our efforts in implementing this range of economic and social development policies in Mali, as we are encouraged by the results achieved in previous strategies. Indeed, the implementation of such strategies has made it possible to increase the schooling rate from 64 per cent in 2002 to 80 per cent in 2008. Mortality for children under the age of 5 has fallen from 229 per thousand in 2001 to 191 per thousand in 2006, while HIV/AIDS prevalence has fallen from 1.7 per cent in 2001 to 1.3 per cent in 2006. Thus, Mali deems it essential to expedite the implementation of the commitments made at key international conferences, particularly the Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development, the Brussels Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the Barbados Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Almaty Conference on landlocked developing States.

Undoubtedly climate change poses one of the greatest challenges currently facing the international community. Today more than ever, the survival of our planet is threatened by natural disasters caused by this phenomenon, which seriously affects the living conditions in developing countries such as my own through — in our case — the encroachment of the desert, the silting up of the Niger river, the deterioration of our ecosystem, the shortening of the winter season and poor rainfall distribution. That is why Mali will spare no effort to make its modest contribution towards finding a global and binding agreement on climate change. To that end, in November 2010 my country will host a regional forum on sustainable development.

The AIDS pandemic continues to hamper development efforts in many countries and thus poses one of the greatest threats to the survival of humanity and global security. In keeping with the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases, the Brazzaville Commitment for universal access to treatment in Africa and the Lomé Declaration on HIV/AIDS in Africa, Mali has launched a vast programme of multisectoral reform, both at the institutional and operational levels. That programme compels all the sectors, in particular the public, private and civil society sectors, to become better organized in order to better coordinate their activities to combat AIDS effectively and be held accountable to the nation.

The new transnational threats of trafficking in drugs, arms, human beings and terrorism seriously jeopardize international peace and security. The international community must resolutely tackle those threats. That means acting quickly and effectively. As I underscored in the General Assembly during the second review of the United Nations global counter-terrorism strategy on 8 September 2010, Mali has adopted a new strategy to combat the lack of security and terrorism. On the one hand, this new strategy seeks to strengthen national capacities through robust actions in the field of security and community development and on the other hand it seeks to promote effective regional cooperation with the unified commitment of States of the Sahelo-Saharan region and with the support of the international community. Building on this same impetus, the President of the Republic of Mali, His Excellency Mr. Amadou Toumani Touré, has taken the initiative of organizing a conference in Mali on peace, security and development in the Sahelo-Saharan region.

The maintenance of international peace and security has been and will remain one of the most pressing concerns of the international community. Without peace there is no development or prosperity, nor will there be, and that is why Mali remains firmly attached to the ideals of peace and stability, both within and beyond its borders. In this regard, we welcome the progress made in national reconstruction and reconciliation, in peacebuilding and in the process of democratic transition, in particular in Guinea-Bissau, the Republic of Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In the Middle East, we reaffirm our solidarity with our brother Palestinian people in their courageous struggle for the creation of an independent and sovereign State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, and we have closely followed the evolving situation in that part of the world and continue to support the relevant resolutions of the United Nations in this area.

To conclude, I should like to reiterate our solidarity with the brotherly people of Haiti, as they seek to rebuild their country, and to express our deep sympathy to the victims of the natural disasters that have afflicted China, India, Pakistan, Russia and other

countries, in particular in Africa. Millions of people worldwide continue to place their hopes in the United Nations, and, as the community of nations, we do not have the right to let them down. It is our obligation to guarantee sustainable development for future generations and to preserve them from the scourge of war.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sergei Aleinik, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

Mr. Aleinik (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The nature of the discussions and decisions taken at the High-level Plenary Meeting has clearly demonstrated that the various problems, challenges and threats we face, however difficult and dangerous they may be, can only be overcome if we work together. The world has changed significantly over the past 10 years, and our capacity to make peoples' lives in all continents better and safer has been broadened. We have seen the change in international relations. There has been an enhancement of constructive, mutually respectful dialogue between States, and a new global partnership is forming. All the preconditions exist so that at this session we can establish a road map of international cooperation on all strategic issues referred to in the Outcome Document of the Summit. Particular attention should be given to the financial economic sphere, because it is directly linked to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We can achieve those Goals, even in the current situation, if the necessary financial resources, skills and technologies are used to support development. What has been done so far is insufficient. If we analyse the current situation in an objective way, we see that the largest developed countries have spent trillions of dollars on supporting their economies. This has given some results, but the backdrop of this is that it has become clear that providing resources for official development assistance and international technical assistance continues to be below the real needs of developing countries and countries in transition. Developed countries have adopted protectionist measures. There has been price pressure on small and medium countries for many sensitive categories of goods. In such a context, progress towards the Millennium Development Goals cannot be smooth.

In general terms, Belarus supports the work of the Group of 20 (G-20) and the Group of Eight (G-8) to overcome the world economic crisis, but we must assume that the major countries in these clubs will first and foremost promote their own interests. The General Assembly must take the necessary measures to improve the economic toolbox of the entire United Nations system. Otherwise our Organization will not be able to play an important role in global economic management and small and medium-sized countries will have no leverage on these processes.

First of all, we must continue the process of updating the work and enhancing the potential of the Bretton Woods institutions and increase the role of developing countries and countries with transitional economies in decision-making in their governing bodies. The General Assembly, although it might not be able directly to influence this process, must raise its voice on this issue. We refer here to those bodies where all countries, without exception, can put forward their positions and submit appropriate proposals.

In 2005 and 2006, significant efforts were made to improve the work of the Economic and Social Council, converting it from a body that coordinates the work of thematic commissions and committees in the economic and social spheres to a body that adopts political decisions and recommendations in those areas. Some progress has been achieved here, of course; but it is insufficient if we want to reach by 2015 good indicators with regard to implementing the strategic tasks under the Millennium Development Goals. The Economic and Social Council is still the same: it has not become a full-fledged economic organ of the United Nations. We suggest in the remaining five years that the Council should give special attention to each of the Millennium Development Goals and make appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly and to Member States.

Belarus, which has submitted its candidature for membership of the Economic and Social Council in 2011, is ready to work actively in this regard.

We cannot attain the Millennium Development Goals unless we establish a genuine, strong structure of United Nations operational activities. Here, we welcome the increased intergovernmental dialogue on enhancing coherence in the operations of United Nations agencies and the measures that have been taken to reform the United Nations gender architecture. Besides enhancing the institutions, the financing of bodies that undertake operational activities needs to be improved. In this Hall, we have heard many addresses with regard to the work of the G-8 and the G-20 and their

initiative to find innovative approaches to financing. We have heard of the intention of the European Union to monitor the Union's respect for its commitments with regard to official development assistance. We hope that those measures will indeed be implemented.

Belarus, like many other delegations in this room, is concerned at the status of the Doha multilateral trade talks, particularly given the recent trends towards a tougher position by developed countries. Developing countries in particular suffer from this, as do medium-income countries. For more than 10 years, talks have been under way on membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO) of about 30 States. Is this a normal situation if we are talking about the need to ensure that States move forward on achieving the Millennium Development Goals and a genuinely multilateral trade system? This is genuine discrimination against certain States. Therefore we believe that the rules for WTO membership by these countries should be reviewed and simplified.

If we are now serious about United Nations management of global processes, then General Assembly resolutions on the role of international trade in stimulating development should be more targeted towards achieving long-term results. What is most important is to make recommendations on urgent collective measures to establish a multilateral trading system that meets the needs of today's world.

The General Assembly must send an unequivocal political signal to parties to the upcoming Cancún talks on developing a new post-Kyoto international agreement on limiting emissions of greenhouse gases. This year we have seen that the measures that have been taken have been inadequate. The virtual absence of targeted collective measures by the international community could lead to irreversible consequences. If States are ready to demonstrate genuine partnership in order to avoid the worst-case scenario, then the General Assembly must adopt a resolution on the problem of climate change and offer relevant recommendations and proposals before the 29 November opening of the sixteenth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

It is time to end competing ambitions with regard to climate change. Belarus has direct experience of the low level of cooperation between countries and the level of their respect for each other's interests. This has meant that our attempts to adopt the most stringent voluntary quantitative limits under the Kyoto Protocol, and thus to make our contribution to the common goal of protecting the climate, have so far been unsuccessful. Belarus's amendment to Annex B of the Kyoto Protocol has not yet entered into force.

Closely related to protection of the climate is the issue of a reliable system of global energy security and the development of so-called green economies. Many States already have considerable experience in establishing sustainable, low-carbon economies. Many States still do not have clean technology, and this puts a brake on their development. Of course, neither the United Nations system nor any other international organization can immediately resolve this problem on its own. Establishing a promising international mechanism of cooperation in order to enhance access to cutting-edge energy technologies, including technology for new and renewable energy sources, is possible only on the basis of a genuine partnership, with leadership from the United Nations and from States that have been most successful in developing green economies.

Belarus has already made a significant contribution to establishing such partnerships. We have established an international laboratory for renewable sources of energy based at the Energy Institute at the National Academy of Sciences. This is first and foremost a platform for exchanging experiences with regard to renewable energy. This is no less important than addressing the climatic conditions in our countries; it will provide an experimental basis for developing and testing effective uses of green technologies. Without any doubt this will make a significant contribution to developing global renewable energy. We can only imagine how much progress the international community would make if each State in the world would, within its means, contribute resources to the development of renewable energy, aimed not only at its own domestic needs but also at exchanging experiences with foreign colleagues.

The MDG Summit confirmed the need for the international community to find longer-term solutions to problems. By following such an approach, States Members of the United Nations will, as the Secretary-General has said, be able to provide a better future for all. Achieving this was the aim of the declaration by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus on establishing a partnership with young people to protect

them from social decline; the theme of this partnership is helping future generations prosper. The theme of young people is not new in itself, and it has often been discussed in various forums. But implementing this idea would enable us to take a qualitative step forward in establishing a reliable basis for sustainable human development. We are convinced that Member States will support the Belarus initiative to convene a thematic General Assembly debate on supporting talented young people and protecting the coming generation from social decline.

In April next year we will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. In the varied spectrum of contemporary challenges and threats the issue of Chernobyl has unfortunately become a low priority. But the objective situation is that the consequences of that massive man-made disaster are still being felt, which means that implementing the United Nations 10-year plan for recovery and long-term development of the affected regions is still an urgent task. That is not just of concern to Belarus, Russia and Ukraine; the successful mitigation of the consequences of Chernobyl is in the interests of the entire international community.

Given that situation, Belarus, Russia and Ukraine intend to prepare a draft resolution on enhancing international cooperation and coordination of efforts in order to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. That is intended to further intensify measures to implement a plan of action and draw the attention of the international community to the memorial events planned for 2011 in the capitals of the States most affected by the Chernobyl disaster. We call for support for that draft resolution on Chernobyl in the General Assembly and for the traditional solidarity with the most affected countries.

This year the Republic of Belarus for the first time became a participant in and donor to United Nations peacekeeping operations. That again demonstrates that Belarus not only shares the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter but is making a tangible contribution to strengthening international peace and security.

In conclusion, allow me to assure the Assembly that our country will continue to play its part in enhancing the authority and increasing the institutional capacity of the United Nations. Given its universal nature, the United Nations should guard and enhance its paramount role in the global management of peace processes, improve people's lives and protect them from the threats and challenges of our unstable times.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Georges Rebelo Chikoti, Secretary of State for External Relations of the Republic of Angola.

Mr. Chikoti (Angola) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): First, I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session and to assure him that he can count on the support of Angola so that at the end of this session we will all be better prepared to respond to the multiple and complex challenges facing the international community. I also take this opportunity to convey, though the President, our most sincere gratitude to the outgoing President for the selfless manner in which he conducted the sixty-fourth session.

In the last decade several events have profoundly marked the world community, including natural calamities and man-made disasters, which should lead us to consider the need to work towards a more cooperative and increasingly integrated world, for no one is immune to those phenomena. The terrorist attack of 2001 on the Twin Towers of New York that killed more than 3,000 people, the tsunami of December 2004 in which more than 200,000 people perished, the recent earthquake in Haiti that caused more than 200,000 deaths, and the series of natural disasters that have occurred on every continent, added to the global financial and economic crisis, should awaken us to the fact that we live in a different world that requires broader cooperation among nations, given that those phenomena are unforeseeable.

Therefore, in today's world, the consequences of the irresponsibility of a few can have repercussions on the lives of us all. It is thus imperative that we pursue relationships that have greater balance and equality between large and small and rich and poor, because the new reality is that we are increasingly interdependent in a global world.

Angola, has always been convinced of the important role of the United Nations and of multilateral diplomacy in general, because no country can progress and develop unilaterally, isolated from the community of nations and alienated from the common problems affecting humanity as a whole.

In the President's speech to the General Assembly on the occasion of his election (see *A/64/PV.93*), among other things he set the following topics as priorities for the sixty-fifth session: climate change, the Millennium Development Goals, food security, sustainable development, rebuilding and strengthening fragile post-conflict States, and humanitarian aid and disarmament. Angola is of the opinion that the environment and other issues he mentioned must remain priorities on the national and international agendas. They are crucial for sustainable development, for the growth of our economies, for the implementation of national strategies for combating poverty, and for the attainment of the Millennium Goals.

At the Food and Agriculture Organization's Regional Conference for Africa, held recently in Luanda, the participants expressed their concern about the impact of climate change on the world food crisis in some regions and recommended that States make an extra effort to reduce its impact on agriculture.

Angola believes in the importance of multilateralism as the best form of treatment and resolution of the multifaceted challenges that humanity faces today. In that context Angola advocates a shared commitment to find solutions to our problems at all levels.

My country gives priority to political and diplomatic coordination and to strengthening institutional relations with the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as with the regional and subregional organizations to which it belongs, namely, the African Union, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Commission on the Gulf of Guinea, the latter having its headquarters in Angola.

In the Commission on the Gulf of Guinea, member States cooperate with a view to managing potential conflicts linked to maritime borders and managing shared maritime resources, as well as coordinating policies for the prevention of maritime trafficking and piracy, thus providing security to a region that produces more than 15 per cent of the world's oil.

With that motivation, Angola and its armed forces bravely participated in the liberation of southern Africa, having contributed to the independence of Namibia and to the end of apartheid in South Africa. With that same motivation we contributed to the stabilization of the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With other international partners of the United Nations, we are participating in the training of the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Today the Angolan armed forces are a factor for stability not only for Angola, but also for the southern and central regions of Africa, where we are part of the early warning mechanisms of SADC and ECCAS. At present we are committed to finding solutions to the crisis in Guinea-Bissau, in close cooperation with other partners in West Africa, namely, the Economic Community of West African States, and in partnership with the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries.

It was therefore with great amazement that we learned of the mention of involvement by the Angolan armed forces in alleged acts of human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in a report intended to be circulated as a document of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. We stress that that document was produced at the initiative of an organ of the United Nations Secretariat with no specific mandate from the Secretary-General or from Member States.

It is important to emphasize before the Assembly that Angola intervened in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the basis of a SADC mandate, at the request of the Government of the Democratic Republic. That intervention made it possible to stop the bloodbath and to save the lives of millions of people and lay the basis for the negotiations that culminated in the establishment of the transitional Government, the installation of the United Nations peacekeeping mission and the successful holding of the first democratic elections. It thus contributed to the pacification of the Great Lakes region.

Angola vehemently rejects the insinuation and considers abnormal the manner in which that so-called mapping exercise was conducted. We question the motivations behind that venture. We would like to reiterate that Angola and the Angolan armed forces will continue to act responsibly and on the basis of international standards and scrupulous respect for human rights.

The report of the Secretary-General to the sixty-fifth session contains references to peace and security, considering them essential for development and for the

promotion of and respect for human rights. Angola shares the concerns of the Secretary-General. Our experience shows that only peace, the democratic rule of law and respect for human rights can guarantee the stability necessary for sustainable development and improvement of the living conditions of our people. Angola encourages the efforts by regional organizations and the United Nations in conflict resolution and peacekeeping to ensure global security and stability.

A situation that is certainly of concern to all of us is the conflict in the Middle East. Angola recognizes that it has lasted a long time, with serious consequences for the population. Therefore we support the resumption of peace talks by President Barack Obama with a view to creating a Palestinian State that coexists peacefully with the State of Israel.

Angola is also concerned at the persistence of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, despite successive General Assembly resolutions demanding its immediate removal. That unilateral measure, particularly its extraterritorial effects, is contrary to the principles and norms of international law and contributes to the precarious humanitarian and social situation of the Cuban population. From this rostrum we reiterate our vehement appeal for the lifting of a measure whose anachronistic nature has been restated here on numerous occasions.

Regarding the question of Western Sahara, Angola notes with concern that despite various United Nations resolutions and initiatives, there has not been the type of progress that would lead to meeting the aspirations of the Saharan people. We urge the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to attain those objectives.

Mutually beneficial cooperation, the promotion of peace and respect for human rights remain the major drivers of Angolan foreign policy, based on the observance of the principles of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

Internally, and as a result of experiences during different periods in our history, marked by three decades of war and political instability, Angola is now entering a new cycle, of which we are very proud. It is characterized by the adoption of a new constitution that marks the end of the transition period and definitively establishes democratic rule of law, given that elections will be held in June 2012.

We are aware that we still have a long way to go, especially in view of all the time lost and the delays accumulated in several areas. But it seems important to us to emphasize that the progress already achieved did not happen by chance. Rather, it resulted from the leadership efforts of the Angolan executive organs, the pragmatism of its policies and its commitment to better the human development indexes, which are reflected today in the improved welfare of the people.

After eight years of peace, Angola has implemented economic and social reform policies that have allowed for the revitalization of its economy and the rehabilitation of key infrastructure. Such policies have enabled the country's annual growth rates to average double digits, with a direct impact on the improvement of basic indicators of the Millennium Development Goals.

Since 2002 more than 2 million children have been enrolled in primary education. The percentage of children attending school has risen sharply, to 76 per cent. The rate of infant and maternal mortality fell considerably, from 1,400 per 100,000 live births in 2001 to 660 per 100,000 live births in 2010. Moreover, in order to eradicate hunger and poverty, Angola has adopted its National Food Security Strategy (2009-2014) as a mechanism to increase agricultural production in a sustainable manner.

We are convinced that the international community is also aware of how much still has to be done, particularly in the areas of financing for development and the materialization of the commitments made at major international conferences on financing for development.

Finally, the reform of the Security Council, given its importance in the democratization of international relations, must remain a topic on the agenda of the Organization. In that connection, Angola reiterates its support for the African common position embodied in the Ezulwini Consensus.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Claude Heller, chair of the delegation of the United Mexican States.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me begin by conveying the warm congratulations of the delegation of Mexico to Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election as President of the General Assembly at this new session. I also wish to express our appreciation to

his predecessor, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for his work, and our appreciation and support to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his efforts for peace and development.

The recent high-level meetings have shown the magnitude of the challenges that confront the international community and thus the United Nations. The obstacles to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the economic crisis in all its manifestations, the disasters associated with climate change, the continuing threats to peace and security — in either their traditional or new forms — and the difficulties in effectively addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation define the agenda of multilateral institutions and of the policies of our Governments.

Nevertheless, the primary responsibility of this Organization is the maintenance of international peace and security. Years of war and conflict on every continent, with enormous loss of lives and significant economic and social costs, have tested the ability of the United Nations to prevent, contain and reverse armed conflicts.

That is the case in Afghanistan and Iraq, where after years of conflicts and interventions there is still hope that those countries will be able to fully assume their own destiny without outside interference. In Somalia and the Sudan the prospects for peaceful settlements and reconciliation still seem to be distant, requiring the will of the parties and careful monitoring by the international community to prevent the escalation, the extension, of the crises and to ensure the protection of the civilian population.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo impunity prevails, and despite the presence of United Nations forces, outrageous and unacceptable crimes are committed against civilians, particularly women and children. The reconstruction of Haiti after the terrible earthquake last January, which even affected United Nations personnel, is taking place under dramatic conditions.

The list of challenges is endless, and indeed there is the risk of a backsliding and escalation of violence in several critical regions of the world.

In the Middle East, despite 60 years of conflict and scepticism due to past failures, there is renewed hope for peace, thanks to the resumption of direct talks between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The creation of a politically and economically viable Palestinian State, living in peace side by side with Israel, within secure and internationally recognized borders, is an essential condition for the establishment of lasting peace in the Middle East. We particularly welcome the efforts of the Administration of President Barack Obama to achieve that goal.

Mexico expresses its strong support for the ongoing negotiations. Nonetheless, the hope of a definitive agreement is marred by the threats and provocations of extremist forces that seek to derail direct negotiations. The leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority have an appointment with history. Let us hope that they are up to the challenge. To that end they can count on the unstinting support of States genuinely committed to the peace process.

The existence of weapons of mass destruction remains a threat to humanity and increases global insecurity. In 2010, significant progress has been made in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation, and the international community has renewed its commitment to nuclear safety. The signing of the new strategic arms reduction treaty between the United States and Russia, the nuclear summit held in Washington and the outcome of the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) are achievements that must be commended. We cannot ignore that the credibility and viability of the disarmament agenda depend on the universalization of the NPT and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would constitute a parallel and decisive step in that regard.

With regard to the cases of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran, it will be necessary to move forward through dialogue and negotiation in order to resolve the controversies arising from their nuclear programmes. The adoption of sanctions is not incompatible with the recourse to diplomacy, which is still ongoing.

However, international security does not depend exclusively on the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. It is also threatened by the existence of small arms and light weapons and their illicit trafficking, which fuel conflicts, claim the lives of thousands of people and destabilize our societies. It is

time to tackle that challenge head on, implementing the Programme of Action on illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and progressing towards the adoption of an arms trade treaty.

With regard to development, the consequences of the recent international economic and financial crisis, caused largely by the failure of the regulatory mechanisms and the excessive indebtedness of the world's major economies, are still being suffered worldwide.

The failures that led to this crisis must be addressed, and the United Nations must be able to play a significant role in that undertaking. The crisis demonstrated the need to promote international cooperation schemes that would allow us to act effectively and efficiently to meet the challenges arising from it. In particular, it is worth highlighting the positive work of the Group of 20 in this regard. However, we also believe that the United Nations should play a more relevant role in the discussions on necessary international economic governance reform. In this sense, we share the objectives set by the President of the General Assembly.

In this context, the prospects for achieving the Millennium Development Goals have been severely hampered by the crisis. Thus, the commitments in official development assistance made at the Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development and endorsed at the 2008 Doha Follow-up Conference have been jeopardized. These commitments must be honoured. The Millennium Development Goals can be attained in all countries if we take appropriate individual and collective action, as indicated in resolution 65/1, adopted at the High-level Plenary Meeting held here at Headquarters last week. It is also indispensable that we progress towards the successful conclusion of the Doha Round of trade negotiations, fully respecting its linkage with the development agenda.

In addition to the traditional challenges, our Organization faces new challenges that test its ability to react and adapt. Terrorism, on the one hand, and the globalization of transnational organized crime on the other, including drug trafficking, pose new threats to peace and security that destabilize entire countries and regions, modifying the traditional notion of international security. The fight against these phenomena is not the exclusive responsibility of one particular country or region; these are global phenomena that must be addressed and resolved by the international community based on the fundamental principle of shared responsibility. We cannot ignore the fact that the permissive social behaviour in some countries stimulates illicit activities in others.

The Government of Mexico has assumed full responsibility for meeting the challenges posed by drug trafficking and activities related to organized crime, restoring State authority in areas where impunity had prevailed. This fight requires an increased investment of resources and has unfortunately also led to the loss of lives. The cost is high, but would be even higher for our society if the authority of the State remained impassive in the face of violence, corruption and the accompanying impunity. Compliance with international commitments in the area of drug trafficking is indispensable in order to meet this challenge.

Migration is a reality of our contemporary world that cannot be ignored by our Organization. Its multidimensional nature obliges us to consider its causes and effects from an international perspective. The migratory phenomenon should be addressed through a holistic approach that recognizes the contribution of migrants to the countries of origin and of destination alike, among other factors. In November, Mexico will host the fourth meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, the outcome of which will be duly reported to this Assembly.

The Government of Mexico is committed to the promotion of human rights of all migrants, irrespective of their migratory status. We call on all Member States to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Unfortunately, the tendency to criminalize international migration has prevailed. Legislative initiatives and actions singling out minorities in various countries unacceptably codify racism and xenophobia, establishing new barriers between communities and nations. This is unacceptable.

Mexico, a country of origin, transit and destination for migrants, has experienced within its borders the consequences of the exploitation and violence perpetrated by organized criminal gangs that not only smuggle people from different countries, but have not hesitated to cruelly threaten their lives, as was the very regrettable case in our country in August. The competent authorities, in coordination with the

Governments of which the individuals concerned were nationals, are investigating this case and establishing the necessary coordination mechanisms to prevent similar events in the future and to attend more effectively to the protection of migrants, regardless of their origin and legal status.

Nature also poses new challenges. We cannot afford to remain idle in the face of the adverse effects of climate change. The economic and human costs of not addressing this problem are enormous and negatively affect the welfare and well-being of present and future generations. As host of the sixteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and of the sixth Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held later this year in Cancún, Mexico is making every possible effort in a transparent, inclusive and responsible manner to achieve concrete and operational results. In Cancún, we will be able to adopt a broad and balanced set of decisions for immediate implementation. One single action or agreement is not enough to address such a complex phenomenon. The international regime on this matter should evolve constantly in response to technological and socio-economic developments and on the basis of common but differentiated responsibility.

The main advantage of our Organization among the multilateral institutions is its universal character. Its Charter enshrines the commitments that States have made in all these aspects. Thus, United Nations actions are fully legitimate, in accordance with international law. However, we cannot ignore the difficulties that the Organization faces without running the risk of its becoming increasingly less capable of addressing the enormous challenges facing the international community. Its decisions, including those that are legally binding, are difficult to implement and its resources fall short of meeting the many needs that arise in the maintenance of peace and in addressing natural and humanitarian disasters. The Organization's budget and scale of assessments do not reflect the realities of our countries.

As a result, the comprehensive reform of the Organization can be put off no longer; if it is, alternative forums or more selective groups will fill the vacuum created by our Organization's lack of effectiveness. Our Organization requires comprehensive reform, ranging from the adaptation and representativeness of the Security Council to greater coherence in activities for sustainable development. In 2011, the General Assembly will consider the status of the Human Rights Council, while the Council itself will review its own working methods. We must ensure that the outcome of both processes results in the increased effectiveness of its work.

With respect to peacekeeping, difficulties on the ground and the need to adapt operation mandates require the Security Council and the Organization as a whole to elaborate pragmatic actions and strategies that will produce results in the short term. Security Council reform may be the most urgent. Mexico has participated in the process of intergovernmental negotiations, convinced of the need for comprehensive reform to improve the Council's representativeness, transparency, democracy and accountability. This process is relevant to all States, and Security Council reform can be neither determined nor addressed in alternative forums that have an eminently financial purview. This much-needed and urgent reform will not be achieved by imposing the aspirations of a few on the collective will.

As an elected member of the Security Council for the biennium 2009-2010, Mexico has been able to appreciate the constructive role that non-permanent members can play through their contributions to the work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies. Nevertheless, we are also aware of their limitations. The short duration of their mandates impedes the consolidation of achievements and affects the continuity of the work of the Council itself. We are therefore convinced that the principle of immediate re-election or of longer-term seats for non-permanent members are the best options for pragmatic and viable Security Council reform in the short term.

Mexico's participation in the Security Council has been guided by its conviction of the importance of the contribution that elected members can make to the maintenance of international peace and security, in the understanding that this is a shared responsibility in accordance with obligations under the United Nations Charter and not the monopoly of a few. In this sense, we have been able to encourage mediation and the peaceful settlement of disputes; promote disarmament and non-proliferation; preserve respect for international humanitarian law; ensure the protection of the civilian population in armed conflicts, with special emphasis on children; strengthen the rule of law; and foster activities to promote stability and reconstruction in States emerging from conflict.

This year, Mexico celebrates its bicentennial as an independent nation and the centenary of its revolution, the first of the great social revolutions of the twentieth century. From our own experience, we are well aware of the difficulties and obstacles facing the construction of any nation-State in a complex and changing world. Throughout its history, our country's interaction with the world at large has been fraught. Our country has experienced external interventions, occupations and even losses of its territory during periods of political instability. We have been able nonetheless to forge a national identity and unique profile in contemporary international relations.

Today, Mexico is a constructive and open country, peaceful and fully committed to forging agreements for a better world. As a founding Member of our Organization, we have been loyal to its purposes, consistent with the principles of foreign policy enshrined in our Constitution. Our adherence to international law and the contributions of Mexican foreign policy to various fields are well known. We have also learned to appreciate the importance of international cooperation inasmuch as there is no challenge on the United Nations agenda that can be tackled in isolation. The survival of humankind, given the dangers of nuclear war, combating the effects of climate change, overcoming social regression, and the relentless fight against new threats to international security and to our own societies require our greatest individual efforts as well as coordination among States. Mexico will therefore remain deeply committed to multilateralism, of which this universal forum is the first and foremost expression.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency, Mr. Carsten Staur, chair of the delegation of the Kingdom of Denmark.

Mr. Staur (Denmark): The world is undergoing profound changes. Globalization is progressing at an unprecedented speed. The boundaries between domestic and foreign policy are evolving. Developments in one region of the world may trigger unintended actions in other parts of the world. New actors — for good or for bad — have stepped on to the international scene. The world is now on the way to recovery from the financial and economic crises of recent years. More structural challenges, such as climate change, poverty and demographic projections, as well as new security threats, however, will increasingly impact the global agenda. If we are to respond to such challenges, we need an effective multilateral system founded on universal rules and values and on global legitimacy. Here, we turn to the United Nations.

With the Lisbon Treaty in force, the European Union has established the necessary structures to take on the challenges of the twenty-first century and has enhanced its capacity as a global player. We look forward to seeing this reflected in the future position of the European Union in the United Nations, and we regret that it has not been possible to come to an agreement on this issue (see A/64/PV.122). The European Union will retain observer status at the General Assembly. The main effect of the draft resolution will be to enable the European Union's new permanent interlocutors to represent the European Union effectively in the General Assembly, speaking on behalf of the European Union and of its member States, as agreed by them. The European Union has a clear commitment to effective multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core.

One of the most significant global challenges today is to fulfil the promises of the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) for a better world for everyone. With last week's Millennium Development Goals summit, a new momentum has been built — a momentum for action, for the implementation of commitments and for focusing our common efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Five years is not a long time, especially when we also need to overcome the effects of the financial and economic crisis. But our task is clear. We must make the MDGs a reality for all. We need to accelerate progress and scale up our efforts where approaches have proven to be successful. We have to be innovative. Developing countries must focus their political will, administrative capacity and budgetary resources on reaching the MDGs, while we as donors must live up to and fulfil our official development assistance commitments.

We have clear evidence that fragile and conflict-affected countries are lagging behind the most with regard to the achievement of the MDGs. The comparative advantage of the United Nations system and its unique possibilities in combining humanitarian, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, recovery and development approaches are especially relevant in relation to these countries. We strongly encourage the ongoing efforts to strengthen the United Nations role in this regard. We

welcome the Secretary-General's steps to strengthen the peacebuilding architecture, but more work is needed in areas such as strengthened integrated missions, improving in-country leadership, and strengthening the Peacebuilding Support Office in order to forward the peacebuilding agenda.

Green growth is an important challenge that offers new opportunities for employment, innovation and wealth creation in developed and developing countries alike. Together, we must strive to optimize resource efficiency and apply green technologies. Renewable energy is a good example of how new technologies can contribute to development by providing secure, sustainable and affordable energy to millions of people. Green growth is not an obstacle to development but an opportunity. We must unite our efforts to take this agenda forward in the immediate future and in preparation for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in May 2012.

Climate change continues to be one of the greatest and most pressing challenges of our time, and we are already starting to experience the consequences — from melting icecaps in the Arctic, heatwaves in Russia and floods in Pakistan to droughts in Africa. It concerns all of us, and concerted and urgent action is needed. The Copenhagen Accord contains delicate political compromises, paving the way for eventually reaching a global, legally binding international agreement within the United Nations framework. More than 130 countries, covering more than 80 per cent of global emissions, have now associated themselves with the Accord reached in Copenhagen in December last year. We underline the importance of the commitments on fast-start financing, which must be fulfilled. We are looking forward to the sixteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Cancún, Mexico, and hoping for a successful outcome that will significantly advance negotiations on climate change.

In the ever more interdependent and ever more uncertain world we live in, it is of priority to uphold the principles, objectives, universal rights and fundamental values that are enshrined in the United Nations Charter and that form the very basis for global stability, development and global prosperity. Strengthening the mutual understanding between cultures is an important challenge and a valuable opportunity for all of us.

During the past month, we have witnessed just how important it is to maintain mutual respect and understanding. As history has taught us, there are always those who are ready to do the unthinkable in order to catch the attention of the international media. The threats to burn the Koran in Florida were a particularly repulsive example of this phenomenon. We strongly condemn such acts, but as we have learned, the more attention we give such individual acts of provocation, the more they will multiply. We must never allow such acts to steer our steps from the path of dialogue. We must stand firmly and jointly against any call to strife and violence.

States must ensure the human rights and fundamental freedoms of their citizens in order for each individual to take an active part in shaping his or her own future to the benefit and prosperity of all. Women's rights and gender issues are an essential part of human rights. The women's rights agenda supports and strengthens the overall effort of human rights' implementation. International peace and security rest upon the ability and willingness of States to ensure the protection of their populations from human rights violations and atrocity crimes.

In this context, I welcome the ongoing debate among Member States on the responsibility to protect. Denmark will take an active part in the further development of this concept, which provides the framework for a comprehensive approach. It is closely linked to another key Danish priority — that of strengthening the rule of law. Be it at the global, regional or national level, the rule of law provides transparency and accountability and thereby leads to better governance. The establishment of the office of Ombudsperson in relation to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) was a successful example of our work at the global level.

Piracy off the coast of Somalia presents a regional challenge that Denmark — through its naval efforts off Somalia and its chairmanship of the legal working group of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia — is committed to meeting. At the national level Denmark, in close cooperation with partner countries, provides hundreds of millions of dollars to strengthen legal systems and judicial capacities throughout the world. Let me stress here that our support for the International Criminal Court in no way springs from a wish for the Court to prosecute all

international crimes. National jurisdictions are almost always better placed to combat impunity, and through our rule of law programmes we seek to promote true national ownership and complementarity for those able and willing to face the hard choices.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is the most serious danger emanating from globalization. Following many years of deadlock, however, 2010 has been a year of progress. We welcome the international momentum in dealing with the issue of nuclear weapons as reflected in the New START agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation, the nuclear summit and, notably, the results of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) here in New York in May. It is important that all States parties commit to implementing the measures of the NPT action plan.

The issue of non-proliferation remains high on the agenda, not least due to our deepening concerns about the allegedly peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. With the adoption of Security Council resolution 1929 (2010), the international community has sent a clear signal to the Iranian leadership that we do not tolerate the continuous and increasingly grave flouting of Iran's international obligations. It is hoped that this resolution will help to convince Iran to change its current path and enter into negotiations.

I should like to take this opportunity to welcome the parliamentary elections in Afghanistan earlier this month, which represent yet another step on Afghanistan's road towards democracy. The elections came after the successful outcome of the Kabul Conference. We look forward to the implementation of the Conference initiatives leading to the transition to full Afghan ownership in all areas.

The international community and the United Nations must continue to play a supporting role in Afghanistan in the years to come. In this context, Denmark believes there needs to be a coordinated civilian and military engagement in Afghanistan as a precondition for success. The regional aspects also need to be addressed. In this context, my thoughts go to the people and the Government of Pakistan, who have not only experienced sacrifices due to terrorism, but also heavy losses and suffering due to the unprecedented flooding of the country. Denmark has committed more than $45 million in assistance to Pakistan so far this year.

Denmark welcomes the recent relaunch of direct negotiations between the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority on reaching an agreement on all the core issues within one year. We also welcome the Quartet's statement encouraging these negotiations. They will be difficult, but we believe that an agreement is possible and that it is in the interest not only of Israelis and Palestinians, but also of the peoples in the region and beyond. We strongly support the United States efforts to facilitate the negotiations, and we call on the parties to negotiate in good faith and to live up to their obligations. The direct peace talks actualize the importance of enhanced international political and financial support for Palestinian State-building. Denmark and the European Union stand ready to assist in fulfilling the goals of two States for two peoples living side by side in peace and security.

Peace needs to be secured in all parts of the world. In this context, the implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement is vital to the future of the Sudan. The international community needs to support the referendum process to secure inclusive, free and transparent elections. Without prejudging the outcome of the referendum, I should like to stress the importance of developing institutional capacity and of creating more self-sustainability in South Sudan. Likewise, we are very concerned about the humanitarian situation in many parts of the country. Focus should be on securing access to all areas for humanitarian workers and international peacekeepers. In Somalia, the focus must be on the need to support the Transitional Federal Government and improve the coordination of assistance, including within the United Nations system.

The best way to deal with these global challenges is through an effective and strong multilateral system — through a strong United Nations system. The ability of the United Nations effectively and efficiently to deal with the global challenges of the twenty-first century must be improved. Continuing the paths of system-wide coherence and delivering as one is part of that. Reforms of the intergovernmental machinery and of the workings of the Secretariat must also be pursued. We welcome the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform aimed at changing the membership in order to reflect the world of today. Let me take this opportunity to welcome the establishment

of UN Women and the appointment of Ms. Michelle Bachelet of Chile as the first Under-Secretary-General and head of that agency. We have high expectations that the new entity will contribute to streamlining in the area of gender, women's rights and development throughout the United Nations system.

In the area of peacekeeping we commend initiatives, such as New Horizon, to readjust United Nations peacekeeping efforts in light of the experiences gathered during the last decade of immense growth in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Let me conclude by emphasizing that today's world is more complex than ever. But on so many issues, countries want to work together towards long-lasting solutions. More often than not, they turn to the United Nations to find answers. They turn to an international body whose strength has been and still is based on its unique global legitimacy. Hence they, and we, expect the United Nations to live up to expectations, to perform, to show leadership and to push the envelope. Global challenges call for global answers. The United Nations must live up to this call, fulfilling the aspirations of the Charter. No less will do for the twenty-first century.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Michel Kafando, chair of the delegation of Burkina Faso.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, may I, on behalf of my delegation, congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss sincerely and warmly on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this sixty-fifth session. I assure him of our support to ensure a successful session. May I also extend my deepest gratitude to his predecessor, Mr. Ali Treki, who so effectively led the work of the sixty-fourth session. I extend my thanks to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his commitment and resolve in defending the ideals of the Charter.

The sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly is taking place in a difficult international environment, characterized by multiple crises of all kinds — economic, financial, food, energy, and so forth. This is also a time when the international community is wondering whether it really will be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. From that standpoint, fortunately, the recent High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs held here gives hope that the commitments made to the poorest populations will be implemented so that the world can take on a more human face and focus on social and economic well-being, particularly of the most disadvantaged. However, that will be possible only in a healthy and calm environment.

We therefore welcome once again the Climate Change Conference held in Copenhagen in December 2009. Even if it was not able to agree on a figure for reducing greenhouse gases, it nevertheless pushed forward the debate on providing assistance to the most vulnerable countries and on measures to reduce deforestation. We only hope that the commitments made, particularly in the financial area, will be honoured, and we ardently hope that the forthcoming meeting in Cancún will yield a viable environmental agreement. Such an agreement is all the more urgent in that flooding and other climate disasters occurring throughout the world with unbridled cruelty remind us of the great fragility of the environmental balance.

The President returned to the Chair.

Turning to peace and security, conflict resolution throughout the world and particularly in Africa, which is most directly concerned, remains a major challenge for the international community. While some crises have been more or less overcome, for example in West Africa, others continue to be a matter of serious concern. In Togo, open, free and transparent elections were able to be held this year to everybody's satisfaction. Burkina Faso welcomes the ongoing political openness and appeals to that country's partners to continue providing it with the necessary support. In Côte d'Ivoire, major progress was made with the effective disarmament of the Forces nouvelles, the publication of the electoral list and the scheduling of the first round of presidential elections for 31 October. We trust in the ability of all the people of Côte d'Ivoire to overcome the few remaining obstacles and to take up the challenge of achieving peace and lasting development. In Guinea, we still hope that the remaining obstacles that led to the postponement of the second round of presidential elections will soon be overcome. We call on all Guinean political actors to act in moderation so as to enable their country to open up quickly to democracy and to build a prosperous economy for the benefit of all.

I take this opportunity to convey once again Burkina Faso's gratitude to the United Nations and the regional and subregional organizations that put their

confidence in the facilitation and mediation of His Excellency Mr. Blaise Compaore, President of Burkina Faso, and that continue to support his many efforts for peacebuilding, security and the rule of law in West Africa.

In Darfur, the results of the Doha negotiations are encouraging and should persuade the international community to use its influence to speed up political dialogue and strengthen the operational capacity of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur. Burkina Faso is naturally concerned over the insecurity and instability in Somalia, with ongoing insurgent attacks on the Federal Transition Government and the African Union Mission in Somalia. We urge the Security Council and donor countries to fulfil their commitment to supporting the rehabilitation process for the Somali State. The results of our efforts to put an end to the reprehensible acts of piracy on the high seas will have no effect or sustainability unless we eliminate their root causes, including extreme poverty, which provides the most fertile soil.

My country is carefully following political developments in Madagascar and Niger. We welcome the initiatives taken by the transitional authorities in the two countries to organize free and transparent elections that will ensure a return to constitutional order. Turning to Western Sahara, we welcome the impetus given to the negotiations by the Secretary-General, and we call on the protagonists to pursue political dialogue with a view to a peaceful and realistic settlement of the dispute.

One cannot speak of peace and security in Africa without mentioning drugs and narcotics trafficking and their clear link with armed conflicts, the proliferation of light weapons, money-laundering, the financing of organized transnational crime and terrorism. The need to pool our efforts to deal with all this is essential and of concern to every country. The open debate of the Security Council organized by Burkina Faso on 8 December 2009 to address this scourge (see *S/PV.6233*) was a contribution to that effort. We hope that there will be appropriate follow-up so as to keep the international community mobilized.

The Sahelo-Saharan region has for many years been subject to recurrent terrorist attacks. Collective and cooperative efforts must be taken quickly at all levels to ensure peace and security in that part of Africa.

The situation in the Near and Middle East is strongly marked by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Iranian nuclear question. Burkina Faso welcomes the easing of the Gaza blockade and reiterates its call for a total lifting of the embargo. We welcome the direct talks under way between the parties to the conflict. A comprehensive and lasting peace is the only way to ensure the freedom of the Palestinian people in an independent State with secure and recognized borders, the security of Israel, and regional stability.

On the Iranian nuclear question, Burkina Faso hopes that common sense will prevail by reconciling Iran's rights to acquire civilian nuclear power and the legitimate fears of the international community over military nuclear proliferation.

United Nations reform has been on our agenda for several years and some progress has been made, including the adoption on 2 July of resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence, which, inter alia, established UN Women. We trust that other aspects of the reform, particularly of the Security Council, will be achieved within a reasonable time frame in order to correct historic injustices — particularly vis-à-vis Africa, which is the only continent not to have a permanent seat — and to create a more democratic United Nations able to take up the challenges of the world today more effectively.

We trust that this reform dynamic will promote a new spirit that will open the way to participation by the Republic of China on Taiwan in the activities of international bodies, particularly the International Civil Aviation Organization and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Burkina Faso reiterates its faith in multilateralism and solidarity among peoples, and to that end we stand ready to make our modest contribution to building a world of peace and justice.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Afelee Pita, chair of the delegation of Tuvalu.

Mr. Pita (Tuvalu): At the dawn of the new millennium 10 years ago, Tuvalu raised its flag among those of the States Members of the United Nations here in New York as a new member of this body. Our admission was a testimony of hope and opportunity for our nation's destiny in the resolve of humankind through the noble pillars of the United Nations, as

enshrined in its Charter. I am greatly honoured and privileged to speak before this body on behalf of the people and Government of Tuvalu and to convey of the General Assembly our warmest greetings at this session.

At the outset, we join the high commendations expressed by previous speakers to you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, and to your predecessor for his leadership and dedication during his presidency of the last session. Let me reassure your Excellency of our support during your presidency.

As Tuvalu celebrates its thirty-second anniversary of independence later this week, I take this opportunity to acknowledge and convey our sincerest thanks and gratitude to the international community, especially our traditional development partners and close and new friends, for their continued support and cooperation in the pursuit of our development goals. Without their gesture of understanding, friendship and cooperation, Tuvalu could not have achieved the progress it has made to date.

We welcome and support the key priority issues — such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), global governance, and the promotion of sustainable development — that you, Mr. President, clearly highlighted in your opening address to the sixty-fifth session. Last week, the General Assembly convened a High-level Plenary Meeting on the review of the Millennium Development Goals. In the context of achieving these Goals, Tuvalu has been reasonably successful. Our population does not suffer from extreme poverty or hunger. We have very high participation rates in primary education. The participation of women in Tuvalu society is prominent, although representation in Parliament remains an issue. Progress in reducing child mortality has been somewhat slow, and access to adequate health care also remains an issue.

During the review of the MDGs, there was one very clear lesson that we learned. This relates to the fact that while we have made progress in achieving the MDGs, these successes can be easily and very quickly reversed by our particular economic and environmental vulnerability.

In the context of economic vulnerability, the recent global financial and economic crises continue to have an enormous adverse effect on Tuvalu's economy. For a small island economy like Tuvalu's, which is highly reliant and dependent on the import of products from overseas, the severe impact and consequences of such crises also continue to be encountered by our people. One element of that effect was the increased cost of importing fossil fuel. The cost of fossil-fuel dependency is having a crippling effect on our national budget. We are in desperate need of renewable energy and energy-efficiency technologies that are appropriate to the unique conditions of Tuvalu.

Last week, we also undertook a review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. During the discussions, we proposed three key outcomes. First, we need support to help regulate and police illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Secondly, we need to ensure that our economies are able to recover after severe weather events. This means that we need a climate risk insurance mechanism that can draw on public international finance to underwrite the cost of premiums and pay-outs. Thirdly, we are seeking proper acknowledgement of small island developing States' concerns in the United Nations process and their recognition as a discrete group within the United Nations system.

Much has been said and well documented on the importance and seriousness of climate change, especially its adverse impact on small island States and least developed countries like Tuvalu. At the recent Pacific Island Forum meeting, leaders highlighted climate change as the greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific. Our leaders further iterated that unsustainable development and climate change threaten not only the livelihoods of Pacific peoples but also the islands themselves and the cultures they nurture.

However, despite our high expectations of concrete and timely support from the international community, we were deeply concerned and disappointed at the outcomes of the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. We sincerely hope that the forthcoming Conference of the Parties to be held in Cancún later this year will lead to concrete results and not shallow promises. In view of the slow and painful progress in the ongoing negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process, coupled with the lack of concrete commitments shown by key greenhouse gas emitting countries, Tuvalu would like to see three key political commitments come out of the meeting in Cancún.

First, we would like to see all the amendments and rules for the Kyoto Protocol agreed so that such amendments are ready for ratification to avoid a gap in the commitment periods. Secondly, we should decide on a mandate to start negotiations on a new, legally binding agreement based on all elements of the Bali Action Plan. Thirdly, we should agree on a set of decisions that would provide interim steps to implement measures to be incorporated into the new legally binding agreement. That should be the bare minimum we anticipate agreeing upon in Cancún. For Tuvalu, addressing climate change in a substantive way is fundamental to our sustainable development and livelihood. We cannot allow the next conference in Cancún to be another failure like Copenhagen.

Despite the fact that Tuvalu is one of the small island developing States and least developed countries most vulnerable to a wide range of global events, as alluded to earlier, the United Nations General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have not recognized and taken such vulnerability seriously into consideration when addressing the question of graduation from the least developed country category. We strongly believe that Tuvalu's economic and environmental vulnerability cannot be overemphasized and totally ignored, especially with the ongoing consequences of climate change and the recent global crisis. In that regard, we continue to call upon the United Nations and our development partners to recognize our vulnerability as a least developed country in the review of the criteria and the graduation rule for the graduation of least developed countries.

We could not agree more as to the need and importance for the General Assembly and Security Council to be revitalized and reformed, respectively, so as to enable them to fulfil their mandates and roles in a more transparent, coherent, efficient and timely manner. We fully support the ongoing reform processes, and we believe that small island developing States should be allocated a seat in the Security Council.

While we applaud and strongly support the continuing significant role played by the United Nations as the major peacekeeping body in the international community, the efforts and progress made by Taiwan in pursuing peace on both sides of the Straits needs special recognition and encouragement by the United Nations. In addition, we strongly believe that with its active involvement and contributions to international trade, investment, air transport, finance, telecommunications technology and environmental protection, Taiwan deserves to participate more fully as a member of the World Health Organization and other United Nations specialized agencies such as the International Civil Aviation Organization and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Tuvalu therefore urges the United Nations specialized agencies to accommodate Taiwan's meaningful participation in their respective systems and activities.

In conclusion, let me reiterate and underscore the importance and seriousness of climate change as a cross-cutting issue and its adverse impacts, especially the impact of sea-level rise on a small island developing State such as Tuvalu. Although we do acknowledge with profound appreciation the commitments and generous pledges offered by the international community and the establishment of international trust funds specifically earmarked for climate change, the process of accessing such sources of funds, let alone their timely disbursement, is extremely difficult and time consuming for small countries such as Tuvalu. Therefore, such commitments without timely actions to deliver concrete results on the ground may well leave small and poor countries such as Tuvalu to continue to shoulder the burden. May God Bless the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Marten Grunditz, head of the delegation of the Kingdom of Sweden.

Mr. Grunditz (Sweden): May I start by pointing out that Sweden aligns itself fully with the written statement of the European Union (EU), which will soon be distributed to all Member States.

By signing the Charter of the United Nations we have all pledged to combine our efforts towards the shared goals of international peace and security, human rights, respect for international law, and economic and social advancement. Implicit in that pledge is the principle of shared responsibility. If we are to move beyond divisions to find common solutions to global problems, every country will need to assume its share of responsibility. Last week, world leaders met in this room to confirm their determination to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Progress made over the 10 years since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration has been mixed. The overall

trend is positive, but critical areas are lagging behind. This is particularly true for Goal 5 on maternal health. Sweden will continue to do its part to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and is one of the countries contributing the largest share of its national income as official development assistance. But development assistance can only complement — and never replace — development efforts based on genuine national ownership. Thus, we have a shared responsibility, developed and developing countries alike, to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The development and prosperity of poor countries to a large extent depend on their ability to integrate into the global economy. The fact that protectionism has largely been kept at bay during the most severe recession since the 1930s is therefore a major achievement. Robust international rules for open trade and investment are key. Free trade benefits rich and poor countries alike. The regions that have been most successful in eradicating poverty are also those where countries trade the most. In order to strengthen the trading capacity of the poorest countries, aid for trade can play an important role. Completion of the Doha Round must remain a shared first priority, but should not prevent complementary free trade and investment arrangements.

The devastating natural disasters in Haiti and Pakistan have underlined the importance of a well-functioning and well-coordinated international humanitarian system. It is only through joint efforts and shared responsibility that the international community can ensure quick and effective responses to people in need. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) plays a crucial role in this respect. Sadly, we see a global trend of increasing humanitarian needs. It is therefore of utmost importance that we continue to strengthen the humanitarian system as a whole, in particular OCHA. In parallel, we need to focus more on preparedness and prevention to reduce long-term vulnerability to disasters.

Climate change is clearly one of the greatest challenges of our generation, affecting the world and particularly poor countries in unpredictable and devastating ways. Even if we meet the two-degree target set by the United Nations, disasters will continue to be a reality. Developed and developing countries alike share the responsibility to ward off this threat to our planet by working towards concrete climate goals. Developed countries, as major emitters, bear a large share of the responsibility for reducing emissions and for providing funding, but actions must be taken by all countries. The example of Sweden shows that it is possible to achieve both emissions reductions and economic growth — there is no contradiction.

Together we have a shared responsibility as the guardians of human rights, enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration and the relevant conventions. Without respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, all other progress will be incomplete. The ultimate responsibility lies with States. It is for us to put ideals into practice. The Human Rights Council needs to use all its tools to address the substance of its mandate: human rights violations. For that Council to be relevant, its members must meet the membership criteria of fulfilling their international human rights obligations. Much remains to be done. The death penalty continues to be applied extensively across the world, in some cases even against juveniles, and often without a credible legal process. As we have recently seen, in some countries a woman can even be sentenced to death by stoning for alleged adultery, and both men and women can be executed for no other reason than their sexual orientation. The responsibility to stop such barbaric acts lies firmly with us, the governments. Gender equality remains one of the greatest challenges to human rights and democracy. We therefore welcome the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and believe it will further the cause of gender equality.

Democracy and human rights are not just mutually supporting; one cannot be said to truly exist without the other. The right to participate in a democratic system of government is indeed in itself a human right. Although we have seen democracy spread to new countries, a large part of the world's population is still denied the right to participate in free elections. We call upon the Government of Myanmar to make its November election free, fair and inclusive. In this context, we reiterate our call for the release of the political prisoners and detainees, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Freedom of expression is a core human right and a prerequisite of democracy. In this era of information technology, communication has been revolutionized. New technologies can assist in making Governments more transparent and can stimulate citizens to take a

more active role in the democratic governance of their countries. Yet, technology alone cannot make information and expression of opinion free. Access to technology is needed as a catalyst for human rights. The harassment and jailing of journalists and bloggers must stop. The situation in countries such as China, Viet Nam, Egypt, Myanmar, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea and Iran is deeply worrying. It is important that the international community address the issue of violations of freedom of expression, also in connection with new technologies and with greater vigour than in the past.

Sweden is concerned about continued human rights violations in the Sudan, not least in Darfur. Full cooperation with the International Criminal Court is an obligation under international law. The upcoming referendum on the status of Southern Sudan will be of crucial importance to the country's future. We must spare no effort to make sure that it is credible and to support the parties in reaching an agreement on post-referendum arrangements. In this process the United Nations has a key role to play, together with the African Union.

The recently reported cases of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with shocking news of hundreds of rapes of women and children, are not isolated incidents. They are part of a pattern of conflict-related crimes that have been carried out with impunity over many years. As so often in conflict situations, women and children are the most vulnerable groups; as so often in peace processes, women are the most ignored. A lasting peace calls for the empowerment and equal participation of women in negotiations and decision-making. Lasting peace can never be achieved while there is impunity. It is high time to fully implement Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and 1820 (2008), on sexual violence in conflict situations. Sweden welcomes the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

The international community has agreed on the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We need to intensify our efforts and develop the right tools to ensure the full realization of the responsibility to protect, both as sovereign States and as part of the international community. Sweden fully supports the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the early warning capability within the Secretariat.

Few aspects of our cooperation through the United Nations illustrate shared responsibility better than our joint role in preventing and managing conflicts, and keeping and building sustainable peace. Important steps have been taken to improve global peacekeeping. We welcome the New Horizon Initiative as a way of further enhancing the capability of the United Nations to conduct demanding and complex peacekeeping missions worldwide. Much work remains to be done in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. We need to increase the capacity of the United Nations to help countries in transition from war to lasting peace, and to provide relevant support — not least through the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund — for their efforts to foster peace and rebuild State and society. Similarly, the United Nations must have the right tools to help prevent countries from lapsing into conflict in the first place. This is a central challenge for the United Nations and a key priority for the coming decade.

We welcome the increasingly important role that the African Union plays, not least in peacekeeping operations in Africa. Cooperation between the African Union and both the United Nations and the European Union has been important in both the Sudan and Somalia. Earlier this year, Sweden led the European Union's anti-piracy operation off the coast of Somalia, a mission that provides security for humanitarian transports of the World Food Programme into Somalia. Furthermore, the European Union, in close cooperation with the African Union, is conducting training in Uganda of the Transitional Federal Government security forces. The African Union has made a courageous and considerable contribution to security in Mogadishu. Yet over the past year we have witnessed some of the most violent fighting in Mogadishu and in parts of south-central Somalia. Together with the Transitional Federal Institutions, we now need to prepare and plan for the end of the transitional arrangements by August next year. In this process, strong United Nations leadership will be crucial.

The United Nations plays a crucial role in the efforts of the international community to contribute to secure, stable and democratic development in Afghanistan. At the Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan, held in July, there was a renewed commitment by the Afghan authorities and the

international community to enhance national ownership in this process. Together, the United Nations, the European Union and other international actors have to show continued strong resolve in assisting the Afghan people in building a more peaceful and democratic society. To this effect, Sweden will continue to contribute to civilian and military operations in Afghanistan, while increasing our development assistance.

In the Middle East the responsibility for the success of direct negotiations lies with the two parties. But we all share an interest in, and must contribute to, a two-State solution with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security. We deeply regret the Israeli decision not to extend the moratorium on settlements. The context of direct negotiations, as stated in European Union Council conclusions, must be that negotiations should be based on the pre-1967 borders, that settlements are illegal, that all final status issues are to be included in the negotiations — including the status of Jerusalem as capital of two States — and that both parties are to refrain from provocative actions.

We strive for a world without nuclear weapons. World leaders have made significant progress in disarmament and non-proliferation efforts in the past year. The New START agreement is of great importance, but there is scope for further reductions, not least of non-strategic nuclear arsenals. The spread of nuclear weapons must be stopped. The Action Plan adopted at the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in May, covering the three mutually reinforcing pillars of the NPT, must be implemented and fully respected.

The early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is as urgent as ever. The unacceptable deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament must come to an end.

We are deeply concerned that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has continued its withdrawal from the NPT, even having tested two nuclear devices, and that Iran has been conducting activities in violation of its NPT commitments. It is of vital importance that commitments under the NPT be honoured.

The control of conventional arms is also an urgent priority. The illicit or uncontrolled spread of such weapons contributes to regional and international instability, maiming and killing thousands. We must seize the opportunity and strive together to find the political will to agree on regulating mechanisms, such as is currently being discussed in the form of an arms trade treaty.

The European Union is a strong supporter of the United Nations. Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU has established new permanent structures for its external representation, taking over functions previously carried out by the rotating presidency. Ensuring that the EU can continue to contribute effectively to the work of the United Nations requires allowing its representatives to participate actively in its proceedings in the capacity of observer. We are looking forward to continued cooperation with a view to ensuring the adoption of a resolution to that effect as soon as possible.

Our countries are interconnected today in an unprecedented way. In a globalized world, problems such as climate change, natural disasters, disease, drugs, terrorism and conflicts take on new proportions. At the same time the alleviation of poverty, the fight for human rights and democracy, and economic development remain as relevant as ever. We need to cooperate in global structures and engage in various forms of global governance to meet these challenges. The United Nations is the only world body offering a unique forum to address these problems in a coordinated way. We need to continue to reform the United Nations in order for it to fulfil its functions and remain relevant. Only when every country assumes its share of responsibility can the United Nations achieve its full potential. Sweden will continue to be a strong supporter of the United Nations and will assume its share of our common responsibility.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency, Mr. Gert Rosenthal, chair of the delegation of the Republic of Guatemala.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our President, Mr. Álvaro Colom Caballeros, participated in the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (see *A/65/PV.3*) but had to return to Guatemala owing to commitments related to his high office. Similarly, our Minister for Foreign Affairs, who unexpectedly had to leave New York yesterday. It is for this reason that I have the high honour of presenting this message, which was prepared to be presented today by the Minister.

Before proceeding, I should like to express our profound gratitude to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki for his outstanding performance in heading the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Likewise, Mr. Deiss, we wish you every success as President for the current session. We have no doubt that with your vast experience you will guide our deliberations and enhance the work of the General Assembly as the main policymaking organ of the United Nations.

We have just concluded our review of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, adopted 10 years ago in an international environment that was perhaps more encouraging than today's. As has been highlighted in recent days, the results reflect both light and shadow, with some countries showing impressive gains, and others even suffering setbacks. The majority have made progress on some of the Goals but not in others, or have made advances whose benefits have been distributed very unequally among different segments of the population.

In addition, today's international environment is far less encouraging than that of 10 years ago. The previous decade began with the attack on the twin towers in this very city, placing counter-terrorism squarely as a priority on the international agenda. It continued with a military confrontation that was not sanctioned by the Security Council, with all its consequences, and concluded with three simultaneous crises — food, energy and, especially, financial and economic — from whose effects we have yet to recover.

Further, after building up a cumulative body of scientific evidence that no longer allows any room for doubt, we have confirmed that the very effects of technological progress have brought with them devastating consequences for our common habitat — this planet — and that the destruction wrought by climate change is palpable and dramatic. On another matter, in the current decade we have witnessed very clearly that organized crime does not recognize borders and tends to spread to those countries with the least capacity to confront its considerable resources.

My own country has been a victim of some of these phenomena, which nullify or at least mitigate the considerable efforts we have deployed, especially since the Administration of President Colom took office early in 2008, to stimulate development, achieve higher levels of well-being for the disadvantaged sectors of our population, and strengthen our democratic institutions. Here again we see both light and shadow: in spite of an unfavourable international environment and as President Colom noted in this very Hall on 20 September, we have achieved progress in addressing some of the pressing problems faced by the our country's most vulnerable.

But the shadow is still present. Its origin lies in phenomena that are totally or partially out of our control. I highlight three of them. First, the financial and economic crisis had a sharp adverse impact on our economic performance. Gross national product grew less than 1 per cent in 2009, with declining exports, shrinking family remittances and collapsing foreign direct investment. This had an extremely negative impact on our tax revenues, in spite of the many Government initiatives to raise tax rates to deal with increasing demands for social services and public security. Although we have seen a modest recovery this year, its strength will depend to a large degree on uncertain developments in the international economy. In other words, the international economic environment has not been very conducive to meeting our economic growth goals, in spite of the official cooperation that we have received, which we sincerely appreciate.

Secondly, in the last decade a array of unlawful activities related to organized crime have taken root in our country. Trafficking in persons, arms and narcotics, and money laundering have expanded to a worrisome extent, given the dual abilities of organized criminal groups to co-opt and intimidate. Above all, drug trafficking has undermined our democratic institutions. In response, we have associated ourselves with the United Nations and friendly countries, through both bilateral and multilateral cooperation. This can be seen mostly clearly in the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), to which I will return later. Furthermore, recognizing that the struggle against illegal activities and organized crime — a basic responsibility of all States — has today assumed a clearly transnational character, we have joined our neighbours in Central America and Mexico in combating regional criminal networks.

Thirdly, as if what I have already said were not enough, we have also fallen victim to natural disasters with an unusual frequency, which highlights the extreme vulnerability of Guatemala to the effects of climate change, given its location in a tropical area. We had not even begun to recover from the effects of tropical storm Stan of late 2005 when we were hit by a serious drought in 2009 and, over the past few months,

the eruption of the Pacaya Volcano, which caused extensive damage to agriculture, followed by tropical storm Agatha in June, which affected some 330,000 persons, killed approximately 100 and caused material damage totalling an estimated $1 billion. These estimates in human suffering and material losses have continued to grow with the unprecedented levels of rainfall during the past month, which has contributed even more human victims and material damage.

The Government has done all within its power to address the situation and has appealed for international assistance. I commend the fact that the United Nations was among the first to respond to our call, and I therefore express our appreciation to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme.

To date, we have been focused on the emergency phase, but it is imperative that we move on to reconstruction and recovery as soon as possible. The Government has drawn up a detailed plan to address those goals, and we will convene an international conference to present the plan to our partners in Antigua in Guatemala on 11 and 12 October.

I shall now make some brief remarks on our Organization and its agenda in the immediate future. I begin by reiterating our support for multilateralism in general and for the United Nations in particular. We have enjoyed strong, continuous support from the Organization, in supporting our peace process, facilitating development cooperation and providing assistance when we have faced emergencies, as at the present time.

The latest example of that fruitful and innovative cooperation is the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala. In only three years, the Commission has shown that it is indeed possible to combat impunity and strengthen the rule of law. We value this cooperative effort between the Government of Guatemala and the United Nations, and we will continue to support it.

We also value the work of our Organization in the area of peacekeeping. We have participated in several operations, principally in Haiti and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We support the work of the United Nations in the area of peacebuilding, and we hope to participate in the Peacebuilding Commission as a full member as of next January.

We welcome the decision of the General Assembly to establish the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and we are pleased that its first leader will be Ms. Michelle Bachelet. We also commit ourselves to continue supporting initiatives aimed at achieving greater system-wide coherence.

At the same time, we harbour the hope that, in the coming year, some tangible progress will be made in the long-delayed reform of the Security Council. We believe that it is crucial to provide greater legitimacy to that body, which would benefit all of the main bodies and the Organization overall. In the meantime, we have announced our candidature for one of the seats allocated to our region in the Security Council for the biennium 2012-2013, in the hope of continuing to contribute to its work.

We reiterate our profound commitment to achieving significant progress during the next Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Cancún. We have participated actively in the preparatory work, based on the understanding that rarely has humanity faced a larger challenge that affects all countries and communities on the planet.

In rejoining the Human Rights Council, we reiterate our commitment to the full respect of human rights in all their aspects, including the responsibility to protect our respective populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

It is commonly held that without peace there can be no development. Promising signs have been seen in various parts of the world, which, we hope, may lead to the resolution of long-standing tensions. We trust that the direct negotiations recently begun in the Middle East will be fruitful and lead to a Palestinian State that can coexist with Israel in peace and harmony, within borders that are secure for both parties.

We also applaud the engagement and growing climate of cooperation being generated between the parties separated by the Taiwan Straits.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that we have achieved a major step forward in addressing the International Court of Justice, together with Belize, to seek a juridical solution to the age-old territorial dispute between us. That step required the approval by

our Congress of the Special Agreement signed with Belize in December 2008, which cleared the path for a popular referendum, as provided for under that Agreement. We hope that the Belizean Parliament will also authorize as soon as possible the referendum to be held simultaneously in both countries, as the final step that allows both parties to present themselves to the Court.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Antonio Pedro Monteiro Lima, head of the delegation of the Republic of Cape Verde.

Mr. Lima (Cape Verde) (*spoke in French*): I would like first of all to pay tribute to you, Sir, for your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, and wish you every success as you carry out your duties in that role. Cape Verde offers you its full support.

I also appreciate the commitment of and the very fruitful work carried out by his predecessor, Ambassador Ali Abdussalam Treki, who was able to lead the Assembly during its sixty-fourth session with remarkable dynamism.

We confirm our support for the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, as he seeks to make the United Nations system ever more effective in working for the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of the world to peace, dignity and progress.

Our theme this year is reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance. The points which I shall develop relate to that theme, which is a cross-cutting issue par excellence.

First of all, we have to save the planet. To do that would seem self-evident — here everybody would seem to agree — yet if one considers the negotiations underway with reference to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, there is a tendency towards pessimism rather than optimism. Scientists have for some time now shown that our planet seriously risks not being able to provide for life in all in its plenitude because of the consequences of global warming. We know today that time to act effectively is running out.

The participants at the Copenhagen Summit left knowing that there was no time left for quibbling. We said that last year here ourselves. Now is the time for us to take concerted, coherent and systematic action, so that we can substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions, slow down global warming and avoid a rise in the sea level which could jeopardize vast coastal regions of the world, and in particular the small island developing States, which are particularly vulnerable and suffer first-hand the consequences of increasingly frequent and extreme inclement weather.

Cape Verde is a State of the Sahel. For a long time, therefore, we have faced drought, desertification and dramatic water scarcity. Those phenomena strongly influence what we do to preserve the environment and achieve human development.

We are seeking to adapt to and reduce the impact of climate change, whether it be in the specific terms of land reclamation and water conveyance or in the development of renewable energy, all of which are part of our national growth dynamics, alongside education, health, employment, infrastructure and so on.

We are in process of implementing an ambitious programme to use surface water by building dams and reservoirs to support the modernization of agriculture, the development of livestock farming and food processing — all of which will help farmers everywhere. Following the food crisis of two years ago, , similar efforts were made in Africa and small island developing States to help farmers make a profit, help the economy make progress and help countries face the challenges of climate change. Financing, without which there would be many failures, projects would be abandoned and obstacles would remain insurmountable, was a key factor. So we need quickly to set up the financing announced within the fast-track framework. Time is running out.

We believe that the international community, particularly the developed countries and large emerging countries, must address the increased threat to global security and the repercussions for everybody of the devastating consequences of natural disasters and must continue to support the specific dynamics affecting the most vulnerable States with respect to climate change in the areas of mitigation and adaptation and help them minimize the risks threatening them in the present situation, knowing that some of them are already facing the problems of population shifts and forced migration.

Solidarity is not a meaningless word for people who live on islands. For some individuals, it is a question of survival; for nations, it is a question of their continued existence as peoples. Let us not offer

up the weakest as sacrificial lambs, for tomorrow all of us may be in a similar situation. Let us also not forget that conflicts resulting from water scarcity on the planet are foreseeable, which should be a major concern that we must start tackling as of today.

We wish to reaffirm here that the ocean, which is for our island country our vital environment, our civilization and our inspiration, as well as our potential for the future, must be protected and preserved. Just a few days ago, with six coastal countries in West Africa and Norway, we signed an agreement that will help us collectively to better manage this huge common potential and to keep watch over the protection of our ocean interests. With the coastal States along the Atlantic Ocean, particularly those in the southern Atlantic, we confirm our resolve to make it an area for trade and active solidarity, not unfair competition. Instead of making the ocean just one more element to be gobbled up by human greed, let us try to preserve its unique value as a precious container of life and guardian of the hopes of the planet.

We must protect and empower women. We firmly believe that one of the major revolutions to be made in our time is the one enabling women to truly become full and equal partners with men in their shared quest for progress. In Cape Verde, we have made substantial gains in gender equality and equity, but there are still major challenges. For example, in our current Government consisting of 14 Ministers, eight of them are women. The report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 2010 shows that Cape Verde has achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education. Indeed, in some cases, there are more girls than boys in school.

Major investment in maternal and infant health means that 98 per cent of births are in a hospital environment with specialized assistants. Yet, 25 per cent of women suffer from domestic abuse. In Parliament and in local authorities, there are few women participating. Poverty and unemployment affect more women than men. We continue to work on this issue, and we think we are going in the right direction.

UN Women, recently launched by Economic and Social Council, is a universal entity charged principally with overcoming the obstacles that prevented the four formerly separate bodies working in the gender area from responding more effectively to challenges in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

UN Women is part of the effort to reform the United Nations begun nearly two decades ago with a view towards strengthening system-wide coherence. We would like to congratulate Ms. Michelle Bachelet and assure her of Cape Verde's support in her new duties to defend, promote and empower women. We believe that the robustness of her mandate and her potential role of catalyst for the new entity should encourage donors to respond positively to meet its funding needs.

We must continue to work for peace. The evolving international situation with groups of States coming together to discuss major regional and global issues and to propose solutions is evidence of a trend that, despite everything, is struggling to show its efficiency and cannot seem to reduce the worry of some and the doubts of others.

We continue to believe that the United Nations, where each one of us has his or her place, can play a truly effective part by ensuring going forward so that its dynamism is maintained, its mission is clearly defined, and we all share in the responsibilities and the decision-making. It is our universal institution that brings together the essential conditions for handling the problems of the world and that has been endowed with the necessary collective responsibility. Accordingly, the huge mission of promoting and ensuring better and more effective global governance is a job that must be carried out by the United Nations.

World peace remains a distant goal, and the hotbeds of tension, far from abating, persist, ever closer. Conflicts weaken entire regions, creating refugees and displaced persons by the millions, paralysing economies, destroying infrastructure and obliterating decades of work aimed at promoting education, health and justice for the people. Sometimes the very concept of the human being seems to be vanishing, giving way to an era of modern slaves who can be moulded and exploited at will. Women suffer sexual violence, which has become a weapon of war, and child soldiers are often deployed unscrupulously as combatants by both sides.

The United Nations, in this arena as in others, is still the central element, functioning as the collective conscience of the community of nations, dedicated to managing our communal actions and finding solutions

of consensus and cooperation. In this light, the revitalization of the United Nations seems a requirement of our time, inviting the participation of all.

Cape Verde has always favoured universal and total disarmament. It wishes to help create a world where fear of the other is replaced by the need to cooperate with the other and a recognition of the other as a necessary, complementary partner. We continue to believe, for instance, in the future of talks between Israel and the Palestinians, and we continue to hope that we will see a Middle East with two independent States living side by side in peace and security. But restoring credibility to the Middle East peace process requires, more than anything else, that the parties honour their own obligations, which derive from their commitments and from decisions and resolutions agreed to here in the United Nations. From this point of view, putting an end to hostilities in Gaza and on Israeli soil, halting settlement in the occupied territories, dismantling the wall and ending the blockade seem to us incontrovertible imperatives. We ardently hope that the new talks will bring us closer to peace.

Organized crime is a scourge that my country is fighting directly, with the support of many of our partners. Drug traffickers now swarm into our West African subregion, threatening the stability of our countries and destroying our efforts towards regional stability and peace for our peoples. A determined battle, uniting producing nations, nations of transit and consumer nations, must be vigorously and tirelessly waged. We must not allow drugs to turn our children into pariahs, the unfortunate victims of dirty money. Human rights are at stake in that struggle for our children to live and flourish free of the influence of drugs, so that tomorrow they may become citizens of the world.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century things are evolving in all spheres — and especially in international politics — because of circumstances and events, but also because of the political will of the most enlightened. Is it not time to put an end to situations that are now obsolete vestiges of the cold war and the Second World War, such as in the case of Cuba? The isolation and blockade are sources of tension and frustration and can hardly serve as the basis for new hope. Generations are changing, attitudes are evolving and the aspirations of the young are different now. New generations have the right to a future of peace, understanding and healthy exchange. Let us show the wisdom to offer them a world worthy of their dreams and aspirations.

We must innovate for the future. When we became one of the eight pilot countries for the Delivering as One experiment in 2006, we wanted, of course, to benefit from positive impact of such a leap forward in this way in our relations with the various United Nations agencies. We also wanted to participate in reforming the United Nations system, so that it could better meet the demands of the world today. Moreover, our Government believes that reform means simplifying the well-known United Nations bureaucracy. Today we are witnessing real progress and clear mutual benefits. The funds allotted to our country are increasing, the effectiveness of the various agencies is improving, there is a real sense of ownership, and there is also leadership by the Government and dynamic synergy among all the parties involved — pointing us ever forward on this path. The recent meeting of the eight pilot countries in Hanoi was a success, and we eagerly await new additions to the family.

Since independence 35 years ago, Cape Verde has made great strides in human development and has become a middle-income country. Between 1990 and 2007 our human development index rose from 0.589 to 0.708. Per capita income, barely $300 per year at the time of our independence, is now $3,041 per year. School enrolment stands at 96 per cent. Illiteracy has been reduced to 18.5 per cent, declining as much for women as for men. We project 6 per cent growth for the year 2010.

We have achieved much in education, health and political participation thanks to our Government's policy aimed at eradicating poverty and achieving food security and gender equality and equity. In the last decade poverty has dropped from 49 per cent in 1989 to 36.7 per cent in 2002 to 26 per cent in 2007. Estimates predict a poverty rate in 2010 of 24 per cent.

That progress is the result of investing in people. Education and vocational training are the strategic axes of our governance and take up over half of our State budget. We have also invested in health and social security. Moreover, the Government is following a strategy of making the country an international service provider, so that it can compete in the world economy

and accelerate growth and job creation, thereby increasing family income and significantly decreasing poverty.

While we know that we must act quickly and decisively to save the planet, we seem to drag our feet when it comes to matching concrete actions to our words. While we proclaim the virtues of equality between men and women and gender parity — and their positive effects on development and therefore on peace and security — we still note that substantial political will at the national level and a determined drive at the international level are still needed to push forward the fight to make women full partners in the future of the world. If peace is everywhere considered a fundamental, legitimate aspiration of peoples and nations, and indeed a universal necessity, it is no less true that it must be won every day, and that millions of human beings wake to the sound of guns and wonder every night if they will see the next morning or if their family will still be alive. Peace can no longer be a utopian dream or a fragile, always tentative reality, as in the Middle East, Central Africa or other places in the world.

In an increasingly interdependent and threatened world, we need to give our collective energies a chance and not seclude ourselves in a defeatist attitude of isolation, bereft of any future. We must be innovative in our ways of thinking, in our political ideas and in our vision of the State. We must be innovative and carry our innovation into our inter-State relations and our defence of our own interests, so as to promote equity and democracy in international relations, promote a greater awareness of fair exchange and justice in the relations of States and thereby foster security for all, in a multilateralism driven by the contributions of all members of the international community, thus preserving the hope for peace all around the world.

All the great revealed religions talk of hope and compassion. Will those universal values be condemned to remain the poor relations of international politics? Let us make of their inspired message the bedrock of our international relations. Let us make the individual human the centre of our national concerns and our global interests. That is the basis, it seems to me, of the responsibility to protect that we proclaim here in this Hall. Let us make that message a harbinger of the future for our nations and our peoples, for now more than ever our destinies are shared and tied to our Mother Earth. Humankind is humankind's best medicine, an old African proverb tells us. We can be if we want to be.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting. However, several representatives have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. Before calling on those representatives, I remind members that statements made in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first statement and five for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Nega (Ethiopia): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the opportunity to present my delegation's response in exercising our right of reply to the statement made by the delegation of the State of Eritrea this morning.

Before responding to the specific accusations made by the delegation of Eritrea, I would like to highlight some of the distinctly aggressive behaviour of the incumbent Government in Asmara. First, in the mid-1990s, the regime invaded eastern Sudan, under the cover of a rebel group that it organized, trained and armed against the Sudan, and it continues to meddle unabatedly in the internal affairs of that country, including in Darfur. Secondly, Eritrea invaded Yemen's Hanish Islands in the Red Sea in 1995 and remained in occupation there for more than two years. Thirdly, the Eritrean regime attempted to invade the northern borders of Djibouti in 1997, but backed off due to international pressure. Eritrea nonetheless committed another round of aggression against Djibouti in 2008 and remained in occupation of those areas until 2010, when it was forced to vacate under pressure from the Security Council and a combined face-saving mediation by third parties. Fourthly, the regime unleashed unprovoked aggression against Ethiopia in May 1998 and occupied the northern borders of our country until its army was routed after facing a debacle at the hands of the Ethiopian defence forces in May 2000.

The Eritrean Government is campaigning wildly against my country to conceal the truth, alleging that we were the aggressors and that Ethiopia continues to occupy sovereign Eritrean territory by refusing to implement the decisions of the arbitration Commission established by the two parties — whereas the truth, as ascertained by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims

Commission, is that it was Eritrea that violated Article 2, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Charter by invading the sovereign territory of Ethiopia. Ethiopia accepted the Boundary Commission's delimitation decision and has clearly indicated, time and again, that the demarcation on paper is a legal fiction. International law regarding border demarcation knows no such thing as demarcation on paper. Demarcation is the implementation of the delimitation decision on the ground; demarcation is placing boundary pillars on the ground.

Ethiopia, beyond any reasonable doubt, has been willing to engage with Eritrea in demarcating the common border on the basis of the delimitation decision of the Commission. Ethiopia has always been ready to sit down and discuss with Eritrea in good faith the sectors where the delimitation has not been clear or where differences in understanding or interpretation exist. Until such time as this occurs, it is obvious that Ethiopia or Eritrea may be in control of each other's territory.

I would like to emphasize that Eritrea's alleged claim that Ethiopia is occupying its territory is a figment of its own imagination. The Boundary Commission had no mandate per the Algiers Agreement to transfer territory between the two parties. By the same token, as in the case of the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the United Nations has no power to enforce decisions of arbitration tribunals or to effect a transfer of territory or territorial sovereignty without a specific mandate given it by the parties. It is up to the parties to the Agreement to implement the decision of the Boundary Commission, that is, delimitation on the ground through demarcation.

Ethiopia is and has always been ready to carry out the second half of the Algiers Agreement, namely, a demarcation-focused dialogue. It is Eritrea that has refused to engage in dialogue with Ethiopia on the demarcation of the border, by claiming ad nauseam the so-called occupation of sovereign Eritrean territory. Eritrea is trying to use this to divert attention from its destructive activities in the Horn of Africa by creating a pretext for further aggression.

All the Boundary Commission did in its statement of 27 November 2006 was to indicate on paper the coordinates that describe the boundary. The Commission, in paragraph 22 of its statement, made the following significant point, which Eritrea conveniently ignores. It reads, and I quote: "Until such time as the boundary is finally demarcated, the Delimitation Decision of 13 April 2002 continues as the only valid legal description of the boundary" (*S/2006/992, enclosure, para. 22*). In the final analysis, the most important task that remains is to demarcate the boundary on the ground as per the delimitation decision, which would usher in a durable peace between the two parties.

Mr. Salsabili (Islamic Republic of Iran): This afternoon, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates raised unacceptable claims about the three Iranian islands located in the Persian Gulf, namely, Abu Musa, Tonb-e Bozorg and Tonb-e Kuchak. The Islamic Republic of Iran categorically rejects those remarks as unacceptable claims against Iranian territorial integrity and emphasizes that the three said islands, located in the Persian Gulf, are eternal parts of Iranian territory and consequently are under its sovereignty.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, while stressing its determination to continue its good-neighbourly and brotherly relations with the neighbouring United Arab Emirates, reiterates that all actions and measures taken by the Iranian authorities in those Iranian islands are fully based on the sovereign rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran and on the principle of its territorial integrity. The Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready to continue its bilateral talks with the relevant officials of the United Arab Emirates, with a view to removing any misunderstanding that may arise with regard to implementation of the arrangements emanating from the documents exchanged in 1971 on Abu Musa island.

Ms. Haile (Eritrea): I am taking the floor in exercise of the right of reply in connection with the statement just delivered by the representative of Ethiopia. The representative of Ethiopia made several unfounded accusations that contribute nothing to the peace and security of the region. My delegation categorically rejects all such accusations.

Let me set the record straight. The Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC), established by Eritrea and Ethiopia pursuant to article 4, paragraph 2, of the Algiers Peace Agreement, has put to rest the border dispute between the two countries. Referring to the EEBC's twenty-sixth report (S/2008/40, annex II), the Secretary-General states that

> "the boundary between Ethiopia and Eritrea now automatically stands as demarcated by the boundary points (coordinates) listed in the annex to the Commission's Statement of 27 November 2006, and that [the Commission] considers this decision as binding on the parties. The Commission further asserted that it 'has fulfilled its mandate'". (*S/2008/40, para. 40*)

Therefore, the crux of the matter is Ethiopia's continued occupation of sovereign Eritrean territory, in defiance of the ruling of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission. No campaigns of misinformation or the raising of irrelevant issues in this body will erase that fact. Ethiopia has to face up to its obligations if it is interested in the peace and stability of the region. There is no need to beat around the bush: had Ethiopia not reneged on its commitment and had cooperated fully with the independent Boundary Commission, the issue between the two countries could have been resolved then and there, and the successful conclusion of the Algiers Peace Agreement would have brought the huge suffering of the two peoples to an end in no time.

The peaceful settlement of disputes is the core principle of the United Nations Charter. But Ethiopia has shown its disdain for international law and its lack of interest in the peaceful and legal resolution of disputes. The Algiers Peace Agreement provides for the establishment of three commissions. Two of the commissions have been established and have completed their work. The third commission, with the authority to determine the origins of the conflict, has not yet been established. That task cannot be demanded of any other commission.

Mr. Al-Yafei (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor to comment on the remarks by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

My delegation expresses its regret at the repeated position of Iran, which has rejected the numerous peace initiatives my country has announced to resolve the conflict over the three occupied Emirates islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb through bilateral negotiations or through recourse to the International Court of Justice to seek a legal opinion.

We reiterate our rejection of Iran's occupation and of all military and civilian measures it has taken on the islands with a view to changing their historical and demographic nature and imposing a fait accompli of occupation. We are disappointed that Iran has repeated its position calling for dealing with marginal issues pertaining to the outcome of the occupation of the islands, rather than dealing with the main issue of occupation itself.

The United Arab Emirates hopes that the international community will support its position, which calls upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to reconsider its policy of illegal occupation of the islands and to respond to our peace initiatives, which aim at reaching a comprehensive and just settlement to the issue of these islands in a manner that strengthens security, stability and economic cooperation among the countries of the region.

Mr. Núñez Mosquera (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I marvel at seeing how the Permanent Representative of Sweden, representative of a supposedly civilized and incorruptible country, assumes the right to judge other countries — always poor and underdeveloped countries of the South — on the issue of human rights. The Ambassador spoke, judged, handed down his verdict and abandoned the Hall. I asked him to stay to hear my reply, but he left. I ask myself with what right and moral authority he dares to judge and give opinions on no fewer than eight countries that are respectable and worthy Members of this Organization. Who told him that he could lecture Cubans on human rights, something about which we are deeply proud?

As the entire international community is aware, Sweden is among the countries to have authorized illegal secret flights over its territory by the United States Central Intelligence Agency. That is a dark chapter in Sweden's actions, which it has yet to clarify. When one asks a Swedish official about this, they say that the relevant investigations are being carried out. They have been investigating for several years. They are trying to cover up the issue, but peoples do not have such short memories.

I could also refer to the situation of prostitution in Sweden and of the assaults, including sexual abuse, against women and girls in that country. But, in the interests of time, I shall not do so. I merely ask: When is the Swedish Government going to finish its investigations on the illegal flights over its territory? When will the Swedish Government renounce double standards and political manipulation on such a noble

issue as human rights? How long will they try to continue to mislead the General Assembly?

Mr. Tag-Eldin (Egypt): I take the floor in the exercise of the right of reply to respond to the false allegation made in the statement that was delivered by the representative of Sweden, which included baseless claims about the situation of the freedom of expression in my country, among other countries.

The representative of Sweden should know better. He should know that Egypt has been in the lead of political reform in the Middle East. Freedom of expression is guaranteed, by our constitution and practice, to each and every Egyptian citizen. In Egypt, we have more than 300 newspapers and journals published daily, representing all views from every corner of Egyptian society and political life.

It was therefore shocking to hear the representative of Sweden refer to my country in this manner. We would like to advise the representative of Sweden to become better educated about Egypt and its comprehensive reforms aimed at ensuring a better life for Egyptian citizens and guaranteeing full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression.

Egypt totally and flatly rejects such allegations. The representative of Sweden should know the difference between freedom of expression and insulting prophets and defaming religions in his country, before evaluating the situation of freedom of expression in other countries.

Mr. Ren Yisheng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to speak in exercise of the right of reply with respect to the statement made by the representative of Sweden. The Chinese Government has always protected the economic, social and cultural rights of its citizens, in keeping with the law. Our Government attaches equal importance to other categories of rights such as freedom of expression. Since the beginning of the reform process, the human rights situation in China has greatly improved. This is something that is recognized by everybody; something that no one can deny.

In the course of its history, Sweden has seen some dark incidents of human rights violations. Today it continues to violate the rights of minorities within its borders. One might say the human rights situation in Sweden is rather sombre. That country does not have the right to point fingers at others over human rights situations. Without mentioning the human rights situation in his own country, the representative of Sweden commented on human rights situations in other countries. This utterly twists the truth and is a clear example of double standards.

The Chinese delegation categorically rejects the unfounded accusations made by the representative of Sweden.

The President (*spoke in French*): Before giving the floor once again to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I remind him that second statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to five minutes.

Mr. Salsabili (Islamic Republic of Iran): I apologize for taking the floor again. This time, I wish to make some remarks relating to the representative of Sweden and the human rights situation in Iran and to the statement made by the representative of Ireland yesterday (see A/65/PV.20). I wish to say that, in referring to human rights issues in my country while ignoring their own records of human rights violations, these countries are serving their own political interests and considerations. I recommend that both of these countries avoid abusing the rostrum of this United Nations body to level politically motivated, distorted and false accusations against others.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in exercise of the right of reply.

The meeting rose at 8.25 p.m.